Agency: How Manuscripts Affect and Create Social Realities
Edited by Michael Kohs and Sabine Kienitz

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A ‘letter from Heaven’, ID no. I (33 J) 176/1963, Berlin, Museum of European Cultures (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum Europäischer Kulturen). Written in Emstroda near Gotha, Thuringia, and dated 1776. The original sheet of paper was folded once, making four pages. Here we can see p. 1 with the title ‘Himmels= Brief, welchen, Gott selber geschreiben’ (‘Letter from Heaven, which God Himself has written’) and page 4. The written bifolium was then folded four times. Two words were visible on the two outer sides resulting from this: ‘Gottes Brief’ (‘God’s letter’), shown on p. 4. The upper part of the letter has been cropped and part of the illumination has been cut off. Photography: Christian Krug.
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 SECTION II

Manuscripts Shaping Communities
Fig. 1: Baden-Württemberg Regional Archives, Freiburg State Archives (Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Staatsarchiv Freiburg, StAfR), file cover of document F 196/2 No. 4652. The images in this article are from different files from F 196/2 No. 4652 belonging to the same dossier.
Official procedures in administrative bodies have long been subject to certain principles, rules and patterns of action, but they also depend on paper documents – even in the digital age. Manuals and rules on bureaucratic workflows instruct the official procedures and provide guidelines to staff. Clear hierarchies and file plans ensure a consistent framework exists for these bureaucratic processes. During the period of German nation-building following the National Socialist era and the Second World War, there were two special features that characterised the German administration. Firstly, the whole administrative structure was now subordinated to the Allied authorities. Thus, the decision-making power lay in the hands of several foreign governments that lacked regional, habitual and infrastructural knowledge. The second peculiarity was the issue of reparations, a new field of administrative work for civil servants. Initially, it was primarily a matter of managing confiscated Jewish assets, a task of national importance for which no experience and hardly any legislative guidelines existed at the time. New official documents and forms had to be developed for this purpose to make the legal situation processable administratively. More and more forms had been used in German administration since the office reform began in 1896. The aim of this reform was to speed up daily affairs and generally make bureaucratic workflows in administration more efficient. The forms were increasingly used as a rationalisation tool to facilitate administration and continue to be used today. In the case dealt with here, they were particularly employed to collect, manage and evaluate information about the expropriation of Jewish assets up to May 1945.

An examination of the forms used for declaring what property had been seized during the Nazi period can provide researchers with a number of insights about the documents’ usage. What processes required these forms to be employed in the procedure? What traces of usage can be found on the forms? How were the forms filled in? How were they transmitted and edited? Which actors become visible or remain invisible on the forms?

On the basis of a case study on the compensation procedure concerning Elsa Saenger (1878–1944), a German Jew, this article attempts to reconstruct the transmission path of a form within the legal framework of a compensation process for Jewish property in 1948/49 involving various national...
authorities and institutions. The micro-historical approach of a specific form serving as ‘an epistemological model’ reveals the problems of such an official course of action in the post-war period, in which attempts were made to administer and process the new task of awarding reparations without the possibility of drawing on any pre-existing experience or legislation.

This study is based on the hypothesis that forms are not only passive information carriers, but function as actively involved actors that ‘anticipate and enable certain actions by others’. By requesting a specific action from each user, a form simultaneously arranges these users into an administrative community. In this case, the term community includes all actors from the administrative world involved in this procedure. The term ‘process’ is used in its administrative sense here and is taken to mean a single, but co-operative decision-making process. How a process should be handled and controlled was laid down in internal rules of procedure.

The creation and use of a form

After the end of World War II, the Allied forces sought ways to implement their prepared plans in terms of administering and dealing with the outcomes of Nazi expropriation policy. Before the British Military Government drafted a corresponding restitution law, they wanted to clarify the property control that had already begun in 1946, which also included the expropriated property of former victims of Nazi persecution. Consequently, on 20 October 1947 they issued General Order No. 10 on the basis of Military Government Law No. 52 on blocking and controlling property. This order declared that persons deprived of their property as a result of National Socialist persecution should either have their property returned to them or be compensated for it. Form MGAF/P (‘Military Government Allied Forces/Property’) was created as a consequence of this order (Fig. 2). In this form, individuals were supposed to declare what assets had been confiscated from them by the German authorities or which expropriation processes they were aware of. In official communication, the Regional Tax Office referred to the form as ‘MGAF/P’ (Fig. 8). This document also served as an application for re-establishing the applicant’s former financial circumstances, which is why it was unofficially referred to as a ‘Wiedergutmachungsantrag’ (‘claim for compensation’) in the authorities’ internal communication (Fig. 7).

First and foremost, a form is something neutral to its users as it appears to request some objective information. It also represents efficiency and transparency. This is why so many people who had been persecuted by the Nazi regime filled in declarations again after 1945, even though they had lost their assets precisely through the agency of such forms earlier on. After 1945, form MGAF/P seemed to signify victims’ hope for justice and reparations and the attempt to build up citizens’ confidence in the bureaucracy of the new German state.

For the Allies and the German tax authorities, the purpose of form MGAF/P was to determine the extent and value of seized assets, the original and current situation of the assets and the circumstances of their seizure. From the authorities’ viewpoint, a form was an instrument with which to obtain information in preparation for an official decision. In their role as passive information carriers, forms like MGAF/P were supposed to help both the Allied and the German administration to gain an overview in order to see the extent to which restitution, compensation or indemnification was possible. Assets and seizures were supposed to be categorised and standardised this way in order to manage the high number of items that had been received. In 1948, many of these MGAF/P forms circulated in the British sector of occupied Germany. People who had been persecuted by the Nazi regime, their heirs, lawyers and institutions such as the

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9 General Order No. 10 on the basis of British Military Government Law No. 52 on blocking and controlling property; EHRI: European Holocaust Research Infrastructure <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/de-002409-b_1-0_9-b_1_7530_pr1_3_14>.
10 ‘It is contemplated, however, that shortly thereafter the submission of detailed reports of such blocked property will be required’. Cf. Handbook for Military Government in Germany Prior to Defeat or Surrender, Dec. 1944, Part III, 340 Blocking Control (d).
12 See Graeber 2016.
13 With the ‘Decree on Registering the Property of Jews’ (Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden) of 26 April 1938, Jewish citizens had to disclose all their material assets (jewellery and other valuables containing precious metals) and hand them over in the subsequent ‘Leihhausaktion’ (‘pawnshop action’). Cf. Banken 2009, 314.
14 Cf. Maetz 1930, 140.
Jewish Claim Conference\textsuperscript{15} used the forms in two ways: to ‘declare’ what assets had been seized and to reclaim them. Several forms were often submitted in parallel for or by each person in one and the same procedure; a separate form had to be filled in for each claim for restitution, e.g. one for seized securities, one for property (real estate) and another one for bank accounts. Hence the form required people to differentiate between different kinds of property.

It was with this form that the compensation process began for Elsa Saenger. The proceedings lasted approximately 20 years and involved various parties at the tax authorities in the cities of Freiburg in the south of Germany and Hamburg in the north as well as two military governments – the British and the French – in the period from 1948 to 1966. The form mentioned here is now part of a bundle of files that contains about a hundred folios in each case and is stored at the State Archives in Freiburg and Hamburg. The asset-declaration forms were also handed over to the banks in the British occupation zone by the British Military Government with the aim of obtaining information about seized property in order to block it.\textsuperscript{16} It is for this reason that the form in the case examined here was filled in by Rudolf Herms, who was the owner and custodian of Herms & Co., a Hamburg-based bank. In accordance with the British General Order No. 10, he was obliged to report any expropriations he had witnessed in his position as bank custodian. In addition to the order of the British Military Government, there was another reason for him completing the form, however. The question of his legitimacy to act on behalf of Elsa Saenger reveals a tragic history concerning his own family and the company.

When the process of ‘Aryanisation’ began, the Jewish-run bank house H. A. Jonas Söhne & Co. was signed over to the non-Jewish son-in-law Rudolf Herms, and from 15 September 1941, it was run under the name of ‘Hermes & Co.’, thus creating an internal ‘Aryanisation’ within the family.\textsuperscript{17} Due to his personal experience,\textsuperscript{18} Herms dedicated himself to the task of taking care of compensation and restitution of the confiscated assets of the survivors in his family and his former Jewish clientele after the war. On the basis of this information, it can be assumed that the bank also attempted to recover Elsa Saenger’s confiscated assets. Hence, his motive for filling in the form may have additionally been based on personal initiative and a sense of justice.

The transformation from a blank form to a completed one: problems and solutions

The form this study is concerned with has the lengthy title Declaration by present owner or custodian of property which has been subject to transfer in accordance with paragraph 1 of General Order No. 10. It is a printed form that is written in English with a German translation. The form was designed in a DIN A4 format.\textsuperscript{19} It was intended for the applicants to take it home and fill it in by typing their answers in the gaps using a typewriter. In reconstructing the transformation from a blank to a completed form, however, it became apparent that the form’s originators did not consider certain aspects, which can be attributed to a lack of experience in preparing forms for the declaration of assets. A closer look will show how the declaration form was visually organised and how it shaped the way in which the applicant could respond.\textsuperscript{20}

The form has a non-uniform design (Fig. 2). The response fields are pre-defined in the introductory section with lines prompting details about the local situation of the assets and the applicant’s personal data. In sections I and II, the space for answering is simply blank, with no lines at all. Both fields request information to be provided on the confiscation of immovable or movable property. The applicant cited securities amounting to 10,500 Reichsmark as well as further payments amounting to 5,198.77 Reichsmark as assets which had been ‘transferred’ to Deutsche Bank, Baden-

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The Jewish Claims Conference was founded in 1951 and represented the claims of seized heirless assets, among other issues. The organisation is still active in the field of education and negotiates compensation payments. See <http://www.claimsccon.de> (accessed 20 November 2022).
\item There were other specific forms addressed to banks and other financial institutions: MGAB-(I) 1, MGAF-I (2), and MGAF-I Series A and B. Cf. Handbook for Military Government, Instructions to Financial Institutions, No. 2.
\item See Hamburg State Archives (Staatsarchiv Hamburg, StaAHH), 621-1/77_13.
\item Rudolf Herms’ mother-in-law Emmy Jonas emigrated in 1939, his wife Elisabeth Herms née Jonas barely escaped deportation, and his three sisters-in-law and their families were murdered in concentration camps. Cf. StaAHH, 621-1/77_8 and 621-1/77_9.
\item The DIN norms for paper sizes were introduced in 1922 as a result of standardisation processes (DIN stands for ‘Deutsche Industrie-Norm’, from the German Institute for Standardisation). Cf. Hochedinger 2009, 119f.
\item Cf. Brennies 2006, 46.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Fig. 2: Declaration of property for Elsa Saenger (recto).
Baden on 24 July 1941 based on an order issued by Baden-Baden’s police commissioner. However, the gaps in the form were often too short to allow the claimant to enter adequate answers. Hence, the person had to improvise. Sometimes the respective category was crossed out with several ‘x’s or the paper got drawn into the typewriter several times in order to achieve the smallest possible line spacing. It was virtually impossible to write the required ‘brief description of the circumstances in which transfer was made’ (see section IIc, Fig. 2) in the available space, particularly with a typewriter.

As for other questions, there was not enough space for them at all. Those who designed the form had apparently reckoned with this because there is a note in the header line of the form that says: ‘In cases where there is insufficient space, a supplementary page bearing the number of the paragraph and sub-paragraph should be included as an annex’ (Fig. 2).

The applicant made use of this option to reply to section IIa, but then listed the expropriated securities on the back of the form (Fig. 3). One might ask why the form was drawn up so thoughtlessly and whether there was actually no intention to provide enough space for the replies. After the applicant had filled in all the gaps using a typewriter, he recognised two mistakes he had made: he had forgotten the ‘a’ in ‘Elsa’, which he then added by hand, just like the word ‘Frau’ (‘Mrs.’).

Transmission path of the form

Being the bank’s official representative, Rudolf Herms himself signed the form he had received from the British Military Government on 19 April 1948 and probably submitted it to the chief administrative officer of the district (Landrat) or to the Lord Mayor (Oberbürgermeister). The form subsequently made its way through several administrative bodies, starting with the Control Commission for Germany (British Element)/Central Claims Registry of the British Military Government. Since the seized property was located in Baden-Baden, which belonged to the French occupation zone, the British Military Government transmitted the declaration to the French Military Government. The latter sent the form – via a wrong address in the Rhineland-Palatinate – to the responsible Baden State Office for controlled assets (Landesamt für kontrollierte Vermögen Freiburg), which then delegated the task to the Regional Tax Authority (Finanzamt Baden-Baden), as illustrated in Figure 4.

Visual organisation of the accompanying texts with reference to normative administrative semantics

Although the asset-declaration form contained so much information in its questions and answers, it did not actually speak for itself; each person dealing with the form had to write another letter explaining the pending task related to the form. These accompanying texts were subject to specific standards of formatting, which had also been laid down in the official German ‘office reform’. This reform had created new guidelines for the preparation of outgoing reports, which included all communications between the authorities as well as from an authority to an external body. The accompanying texts that the German authorities issued in the case examined here all comply to the characteristics of a report as a subcategory of a letter. The paper size corresponded to DIN A5, which is half of DIN A4. Due to an official specification, the paper used for the forms was to be treated as a limited resource,\(^2\) which is the reason why these short accounts were written on half-page sheets. In addition, the respective authority always kept a duplicate

\(^2\) Cf. Grull 1929, 126.
of each original letter for its own documentation. The thin carbon copy paper used for this purpose was also used in the original correspondence, as the accompanying letter from the Regional Tax Office shows (Fig. 8). The layout of the reports put the place and date at the top right, the sender’s name at the top left and the journal number and recipient’s address below that. The examples shown here demonstrate that the individual authorities dealt with these requirements in different ways. Elements called ‘subject’ and ‘reference’ were introduced with the incipient office reform, although they did not appear as designations at that time. This changed in the following years and became common practice later, as the accompanying letters by the German administration testify (Figs 6–8). On the State Office’s accompanying letter, the sender, ‘Nr.’ signifying the journal number, and the place and address were part of a pre-print developed in the course of ‘standardisation of business transactions in the offices of the authorities’ (Fig. 7).

The pre-print left some gaps where the characteristic data for the individual transaction were to appear. This visual organisation of the page was part of the process of rationalising bureaucratic measures, which was intended to facilitate and accelerate workflows.

Nationality and languages

The form was written in English, but included a German translation as well. This bilingual approach shows that the form was developed by the British, but was also intended for use by the German authorities. The required categories had to be understandable for people from both language groups.

The Central Claims Registry then regarded the French Military Government as being responsible, which is the reason why the form was sent to the French administration. The latter then wrote their own accompanying letter, which, according to the criteria of German administrative science, was a template on which certain elements were pre-printed: the header with the name and address of the sender, the place, and a line to insert the respective date with a rubber stamp or in writing. The subject was also pre-printed in capital letters: ‘DEMANDE DE RAPPORT D’ENQUÊTE’ with a German translation in capital letters directly underneath (‘Ersuchen um Vorlage eines V-Berichts’).

The unit ‘file number’ was pre-printed in both languages (‘Référence à rappeler’/ ‘Aktenzeichen’) along with instructions. The rest of the DIN A4 sheet, which was about half the page, was left blank to enter the name of the person from whom the property had been confiscated and to provide further instructions. Requesting so-called V-reports (the term is a combination of German and English words; V stands for ‘Vermögen’, i.e. assets) was a common occurrence by the French Military Government. That is shown by the fact that it had developed a form for facilitating the process. Only individual items of data had to be entered (the date, recipient, name of the person concerned with the assets, and other instructions). After that, the page still contained plenty of space for stamps, signatures and other comments. At the end of the page there was an additional field entitled ‘attachments’ in both languages.

Hence, the form moved from one occupation zone to another, so on its mission it was not only connected with the English and German language, but also with French. The French officials were expected to be able to read and edit the
Fig. 5: Accompanying letter by the French Military Government.
form in English or German. Although it referred to an order from the British occupation zone, the French authorities accepted the form instead of insisting on working with their own documents. (This would have meant that the applicant had to fill in a new form, thus complicating the ongoing process as well as the agency of the form enormously. Although this measure was not adopted, the form from the British occupation zone was promptly incorporated into their own administrative cycle.) The French wrote their own accompanying letters in their own language along with a corresponding German translation (Fig. 5), so the inclusion of the French occupation forces increased the range of languages in the procedure from two to three.

**Scripts and notes on the documents as traces of use**

There are four different types of writing on form MGAF/P that reveal different layers of time and processing. The pre-printed ‘questions’ with space and lines provide the basis. By inserting answers with a typewriter, the applicant added a second writing level, and a third writing level with his signature, the crossing-out of a section not applicable to him and his handwritten corrections. The handwritten note ‘Bitte zurücksenden’ (‘Please return’) added by a staff official in Sütterlin script represents the fourth level (Fig. 2). Sütterlin handwriting was developed in Germany in 1911 to simplify the ‘German script’ used up to then. After supporting the ‘German script’ from 1933 onwards, the Nazis then banned it in 1941, in the middle of the Second World War, along with Sütterlin script. It was replaced by Antiqua, a form of Latin script. The reason for the Sütterlin ban was that the script used in the German Reich should also be readable outside the German-speaking area, which was particularly important for the Nazi decrees and orders.\(^{24}\)

As far as the transmission path of the form is concerned, the use of Sütterlin script seems to reveal something about the relationship between the sender and recipient. The handwritten note shows that the author wrote the note and the instructions in his usual handwriting, regardless of any conventions. The note also indicates that its author knew who the later recipient of the form was, as he had to assume that Sütterlin script was still legible for the next addressee. This indicates that the compensation administration, although not having a routine yet, relied on bureaucratic communities that may have existed since the National Socialist administration. The form was annotated with further remarks as well as parphs, i.e. abbreviations of a signature, in order to document that somebody had taken part in the process, to document the next addressee’s own work step or to add further instructions (e.g. ‘Please return’). The rules of procedure of an authority laid down precisely the functional responsibilities ‘which carry out an examination with defined tasks and make the results available in the form of notes as premises for subsequent exercise by other responsibilities’.\(^{25}\) The letter from the Regional Tax Office (the executing authority) contains a note about the whereabouts of the papers – mostly either ‘Wv.’ (= ‘Wiedervorlage’, i.e. ‘For resubmission’) or ‘Z.d.A.’ (= ‘Zu den Akten’, i.e. ‘[To be added] to the files’). In this case, one resubmission was set for 10 December 1948 and another for 20 December 1948 (Fig. 8). The resubmission itself refers to the fixing of a date, but also to the passing of deadlines and the repetition of work steps.

The markings on the accompanying texts confirm that special passages have a specific meaning. A sign at a certain point on the document was to be understood without further explanation because these points were fixed. The layout ‘generalizes the implicit meaning of notes or entries in stamps’,\(^{26}\) which can be seen as another group of markers. The marking of the entrance of a form into the procedure or the office desk was a common operation, which was the reason for using a rubber stamp. In addition to the receipt stamp, the documents examined here also contain company and official stamps. They indicate that there were so many procedures in the respective company or office that these markings were required to facilitate and shorten the workflow by the mechanics of a prepared stamp, e.g. recording the date of all incoming documents of the day.

**Numbers and numbering systems – traces of systematisation and archiving**

The documents contain numerical traces of use, some of which can be assigned, while others cannot. On form MGAF/P, the numbers ‘P521’ and ‘I/2604’ appear in the lower right-hand corner, probably referring to an internal numbering system (Fig. 2). The accompanying text prepared by the French Military Government (Fig. 5) is also sufficiently equipped with numbers: above the submission date of the letter, which is stamped (the stamp contains the year, but the pre-printed

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\(^{25}\) Menne-Haritz 1999b, 96.  
\(^{26}\) Menne-Haritz 1996, 55.
form already inserted the year as ‘194…’, so the information was doubled), the number 1109 is documented in red. The letter itself contains the seemingly consecutive number 92. In addition, a separate reference number was also provided (BE/A1/3012).

Even the State Office that was not responsible and had only received the form by mistake assigned its own journal number (8658/48 II) when forwarding it (Fig. 6). This was received by the responsible State Office, where the process was given its own journal number again (17096; Fig. 7). These different reference/journal numbers show that each authority employed its own system. As a result, however, each institution had its own reference number for one and the same case, which had to be considered for further processing, and this in turn led to errors and additional work instead of rationalising the cases.

There are consecutive page numbers in the upper right-hand corner that serve as pagination (Figs 2–8; the numbers are not consecutive on the documents shown here since they are taken from different files on the same procedure within which they are consecutive). Using these page numbers, all the documents in the same file were marked once the decision had been made before the procedure was discarded, i.e. sent to be archived. The pagination therefore refers to archiving practices and thus the intention that the files might be needed again at a later date. The fact that some numbers were overwritten shows that the individual documents were taken apart, re-sorted and put together again by different editors.

### Bureaucracy and the semiotics of colours

In addition to containing various types of writing and numerical notes, the annotations and comments in the documents vary in colour, some being more colourful than others. Different colours are used for incoming, company and official
stamps (red, violet and blue).\footnote{N.B. Colours can change over time. The stamping ink mentioned refers to the time of investigation in 2018.} Important information was underlined in different colours as well (sometimes using red crayon, sometimes blue, as in Fig. 7), annotations were noted in colour (‘Wv.’ and the corresponding date in red crayon), paraphs in blue and green, and signatures in blue or black. Colour codes play an important role in the representation of cultural knowledge, and official administration routines are no exception. Coloured scripts are a general component of forms in everyday administrative practice.\footnote{Cf. Berwinkel 2016.} Which colours the individual hierarchical levels had to use was governed by different office regulations.\footnote{Cf. Hochedlinger 2009, 126.} Ever since the 20th century, German rules of procedure had assigned ‘the green pencil to the Minister, the red pencil to the State Secretary and the blue pencil to the Head of Department for notes’.\footnote{Hochedlinger 2009, 92. The translation of the quote into English is my own.} In the case of the present study, the applicant signed the declaration form in blue ink. He acted outside the regulatory world and therefore did not have to comply with the colour coding.\footnote{Colour coding was (and still is) a phenomenon of the German authorities. Neither the British nor the French administration worked with defined colours, and there was probably no particular significance in the colours used.}

The colour of the receipt stamp used by the Control Commission, the central organ of the British Military Government,\footnote{See Mayring 1999 on the Control Commission.} was red.\footnote{The declaration of property for Elsa Saenger was submitted together with the declaration of property for her husband, Julius Saenger, who had died in 1929. The Control Commission’s receipt stamp can be found on the application for Julius Saenger. See StAFr F 196/2 No. 4652.} Since it acted on behalf of a State Secretary, the colour assignment fits here. The letters sent by the two State Offices are signed in a blue crayon and could help to identify the signer as the head of department. The
Baden-Baden, den 1. Dezember 1948

An das
Bankhaus Kern & Co
Hamburg 36
Neuer Wall 26/28

Betr.: Wiedergutmachung Elsa Saenger, Baden-Baden, Werderstr. 5.

Sie haben am 19.4.48 an die Zentralmeldestelle eine Anmeldung auf Formblatt MGAF/P über Vermögen abgegeben, das unter Art.1/ Abs.1 der allgemeinen Verfügung 10 fällt.

Diese Anmeldung wurde uns über die Kontrollkommission für Deutsch-land und die franz. Militärregierung zur Bearbeitung zugeleitet. Es ist in ihr davon die Rede, dass aufgrund einer Verfügung des Polizeidirektors von Baden-Baden vom 24.7.41 von Ihnen für Elsa Saenger, Baden-Baden, Wer-
derstr. 5 Wertpapiere über nom. RM 10.500.- und einen Betrag von RM 5.195.77 an die Deutsche Bank Filiale Baden-Baden zu Händen der Abteilung jüdische Vermögen beim Polizeidirektor überwiesen werden mussten.

Als Beleg für die Wiedergutmachungsansprüche bitten wir um Übermittlung einer Abschrift der Verfügung des Polizeidirektors vom 24.7.41, und, falls dies aus dieser nicht schon hervorgeht, um Angabe, welche Zahlung (Judenvermögensabgabe, Reichsfluchtsteuer, allg. Vermögens-verfall) es sich handelt.

[Signature]

Betreff: Wiedergutmachung

[Signature]

(Dr. Voigt)

Wir würden Ihnen für eine beiläufige Antwort, möglichst bis zum 10.12.48, dankbar.

[Signature]

Betreff: Wiedergutmachung

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]
use of the red colour for notes on the letter from the Tax Office (‘Wv.’, see Fig. 8) as well as the underlining on the application form do not fit into this colour scheme, however. The fact that they were added in red probably does not indicate the status of the clerk who was involved, but refers to the relevance to the internal processing of the case and was meant to be spotted quickly when the file was resubmitted. The colours used here therefore only partially help to assign outgoing documents and markings to the hierarchical setting of the people involved in the correspondence. This is not necessary, actually, since most of the letters are signed and bear the name of the person who wrote them.

Conclusion: bureaucrats – a secret community?

More than half a year after Rudolf Herms – one of the main actors involved in the process – had submitted the form to the authorities, he received a reply from the Tax Office. This occurred at the beginning of December 1948. Nothing had happened during this time from his perspective, but a great deal had happened within the administration. The traces of use in the form of writing, numbers and colours on the documents refer to the different levels and positions of those involved and to the chronological sequence of events. The form required certain actions to be taken by each addressee: filling it in, forwarding it, signing it, correcting it, and creating cover letters to go with it. It thus generated numerous communication processes itself: the bank had to send the form, the British Allies had to classify and transmit it, the French Allies had to order further reports to supplement the form, the misdirected form had to be put back on the right course again, the German State Office had to delegate its processing internally, and the German Tax Office needed further information and therefore had to contact the applicant again.

By studying the ‘visual presentation’ of things like notes and stamps in different kinds of writing and colours on the form as proof of its use and circulation and by examining the accompanying letters, it is possible to identify the form as a highly relevant non-human ‘agent’. This non-human agent took over the tasks that humans would otherwise have had to do, e.g. in a one-to-one conversation with the applicant, which would not have been possible due to the distances and the differences between all the bureaucratic authorities concerned. With its entry into the ‘administrative world’, the form shaped a specific kind of community which was not only inaccessible to the applicant, but remained completely hidden to the outside world. The participants in this community were part of the official course of bureaucratic business, which worked beyond the outside world and was closed off from it. The form thus created an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’ perspective. In Max Weber’s sociological terminology, the world of administration represents a world of ‘secrecy’ that communicates by using its own linguistic and graphic semantics, which in turn contributes substantially to its autonomy and constitution.

The form that the British Military Government produced and processed was created in response to the historic crimes that Nazi Germany had perpetrated and with the aim of providing a legal basis for compensation transactions. The drafting of such forms shows that the authorities expected a large number of people to initiate legal claims of this kind, which are dealt with in this document. The form was intended to enable and structure the classification and categorisation of expropriations that had taken place. It thus relates to the attempts to standardise the way in which Nazi crimes were dealt with in post-war German compensation practices, which in turn refer to comparability and uniformity as features of the bureaucratic system.

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35 The exact positions these persons had in the official hierarchy were listed in the respective rules of procedure of the individual authorities and departments.

36 Menne-Haritz 1999a, 334. The translation of the quote into English is my own.
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EHRI: European Holocaust Research Infrastructure <https://portal.ehri-project.eu> (accessed on 8 November 2022).


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Article

Customised Manuscripts to Shape a Community of Readers? Overbeck’s Collection of Rental Manuscripts from Palembang (Indonesia)*

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In the course of the nineteenth century, lending libraries or manuscript-rental shops seem to have gained a firm footing in the local literary market of several urban centres in the Malay world. In the shadow of a thriving indigenous printing industry predominantly producing lithographic reproductions of manuscript texts in a few urban centres, a number of Malay copyists carved out a niche in the market by continuing the Chinese custom of producing writing on demand and distributing the products among family members, friends and peers. The ownership of manuscripts and access to them were both embedded in a network of human relationships which appear to have been increasingly accompanied by monetary transactions as the encroachment of the colonial system deepened. Handwritten and printed texts were relatively rare in the literary production of the Malay world, which was still firmly rooted in its oral basis, and access to them was difficult and had to be negotiated with the owner or custodian of the collection in question. In the absence of public libraries and bookshops catering to the needs of an indigenous audience in the early nineteenth century, the general public was dependent on specialists to read, perform and explain the content of the tales and treatises. Gradually, circumstances changed with the ongoing colonial encroachment by the Dutch in Indonesia and the British in peninsular South-east Asia, introducing vernacular education systems that spread literacy in Malay in Roman script and also promoted Arabic script, particularly in British Malaya. Missionaries supported such ‘modernising’ efforts by not only teaching pupils basic reading and arithmetic, but also training the children and young adults to write, translate, print and bind texts into artefacts that could be stored, traded and distributed easily. These efforts mixed with and also displaced earlier literacy fostered in the traditional literary centres of the palace and religious institutions. Towns became the new cultural centres where manuscripts were produced and distributed from, where colonial masters exploited indigenous workers, where foreign traders settled and thrived for many generations, and where newcomers arrived in throngs to innovate and subvert standards, while itinerant troupes of performers, adventurers and artists mixed all the existing traditions into an eclectic potpourri of forms, languages and styles.

Fin-de-siècle Palembang in the southern parts of the Indonesian island of Sumatra was one of those colonial towns where many different peoples and cultures converged. It was the place of the legendary Mount Siguntang where the great-great-grandchildren of the ‘two-horned’ (Dhul Qarnayn) Alexander the Great reportedly descended to Earth to turn the rice panicles into gold with silver stalks and found the first Malay kingdom of Srivijaya, the origin of the Malay royal lineage. During its long history, Palembang became a Chinese pirate lair in the fifteenth century, later to be conquered by Javanese forces whose cultural dominance of its royal house had a sustained influence on the elite culture of the court. In the early nineteenth century, British (and later Dutch) troops took the town by force, ransacked the court and its library and exiled Sultan Baharuddin, who was a well-reputed patron of the arts and wrote his own poems.

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1 Ulrich Kratz (1977), Teuku Iskandar (1981) and Henri Chambert-Loir (1984, 1991) were the first scholars to discuss the existence of lending libraries in the Malay world in a more than cursory manner, while Salmon (1981) and Kumar and Proudfoot (1996) indicated the continuation of Chinese practices in copying manuscripts for commercial purposes. More recently, I published a preliminary paper about the changing practices of the Malay manuscript economy (Putten 2017), which this paper also builds on.

The manuscripts of the Palembang library were taken to Batavia and, consequently, were partly dispersed among several collections and partly lost. After Dutch imperialist pacification and consolidation in South Sumatra, Arab and Chinese merchants established themselves more firmly in Palembang, which thrived again in the second half of the nineteenth century, making the town one of the main nodes in the Arab-dominated shipping network spanning the Malay Archipelago.

Ever since early times, Palembang has been a place where people settled to trade forest and mining products from the interior for cloth, silver and other goods transported up river. On the north and south banks of the River Musi, merchants and members of the local elite built compounds that developed into neighbourhoods (kampung), which the Dutch numbered for administrative purposes. They divided the kampungs into up- (Ulu) and downstream (Ilir) settlements which correspond with the south and north river banks respectively. Chinese, Arab and other settlers had built their homes here in the vicinity of other compounds where the extended family of the Sultan lived. Quite a few of the kampungs were known as either elite Palembang or Hadrami-Arab neighbourhoods where certain families had their main residence and businesses. These groups had an important influence on the spread of literacy within the town through their activities in an indigenous education system that was religious in nature. A census carried out in the mid-1850s indicates that among the professions in the indigenous community, 67 persons earnt a living as a professional letter-writer and/or copyist of the Qur’an (koran- en brieveschrijvers), which were trades that were obviously connected, while 46 others indicated that they were teachers. The Islamic educational system that some of the Hadrami families maintained in certain neighbourhoods disseminated basic skills in reciting the Qur’an, of course, but also in basic reading, writing and arithmetic among the children who would be sent to the religious centres (langgar) by their parents. These skills were necessary to administer trade with the interior, which was a major source of income for many of the families that lived in town.

Seen against this backdrop of trade and learning that the town shared with other urban centres in regions such as Batavia, Singapore and Surabaya, it does not come as a surprise to learn that Palembang was one of the pioneers of printing in the Dutch East Indies. In 1855 a Dutch official in Palembang sent a lithographed Qur’an to the colonial authorities in Batavia. The Qur’an was printed by a certain Kemas Haji Muhammad Azhari on a press he had brought back on his return voyage from Mecca. Subsequently, the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences invited the Malay language official stationed in Riau, Hermann von de Wall, to write about this Qur’an and the possibilities a free indigenous press could have regarding the ‘intellectual progress of the native population’. Von de Wall gave a detailed description of the layout, the Malay introduction, which displays rules on how to recite the Arabic words, and of the gold-embossed leather covers of the ornate publication. Based on information provided by the Dutch District Officer, von de Wall disclosed how Kemas Muhammad Azhari had procured the press in Singapore for 500 guilders and how proficient the native printer was at printing with it, as he showed the District Officer by printing a short poem during his visit. The language official also commented upon the Lahore-style scribal hand used for copying it for the lithographic process and that copies of the Qur’an sold at a price of 25 guilders a piece.

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3 Cf. Storm van ’s Gravesande 1856, 466–467.
5 See Wall 1857.
Around this time, the Dutch colonial authorities had issues with freedom of publishing by subjects in the colonies and only allowed Bruining the printers and the firm E. J. L. Führi & H. M. van Dorp to set up shop in Batavia in the late 1840s after protracted negotiations. This step meant a breach in the monopoly held by the colonial printing establishment, the Landsdrukkerij, which the authorities had carefully guarded in order to retain complete control over what texts would circulate en masse in the colony. Over the next few years, however, the government would enforce new regulations that were stricter governing the production and circulation of printing, which also made it more difficult for indigenous people to print books in the Dutch East Indies. The Batavian Society, eager to embrace more tolerant regulations, had therefore asked the Malay language specialist, who gladly obliged. However, Dutch local authorities had missed out on earlier developments in Palembang when the same Kemas Muhammad Azhari had already been reproducing the Qur’an in the late 1840s on a press procured in Singapore. From the colophon of the Qur’an produced in 1848, six years prior to the one discussed and welcomed by the Dutch commentators, we learn that not only the printing press was imported from Singapore, but also the knowledge needed to handle it properly, in the person of Ibrahim ibn Husain, who originated from Sahab Nagur and was taught by Abdullah Munysi at Kesberryst’s missionary school in Singapore.

It seems that colonial censorship and intelligence services were not as rigid and (water-)tight as is often surmised in these early years of the colony.

The town of Palembang has produced substantial numbers of Malay and Javanese manuscripts which have been preserved in various repositories. This makes Palembang an important node in the literate networks that constitute the Malay world. As mentioned above, substantial parts of the rich royal collection of manuscripts were taken by Dutch troops and transported to Batavia, where the manuscripts were divided up among several collections in the course of time. In an appendix in his edition of two Malay renderings of Arabic texts by Shihabuddin and Kemas Fakhruddin written in Palembang in the late eighteenth century, the Dutch scholar G. W. J. Drewes presented an extensive, annotated list of titles that were produced in Palembang or connected to it.

Islamic treatises on jurisprudence, mysticism and other fields of religious knowledge seem to constitute most of the topics in these manuscripts, but Palembang also gained a reputation for its narrative poems of the adventurous and romantic type. Other kinds of texts were mainly produced by members of the extended royal family at the royal court or outside it.

This rich heritage has been preserved to this day, not only in the post-colonial repositories that exist in Jakarta and Leiden, but in Palembang itself, which houses quite a number of small private manuscript collections. The majority of these collections have already been digitised and studied by a team of researchers at the Universitas Indonesia. Other efforts to preserve the city’s manuscripts have also been undertaken. Most recently, the DREAMSEA Programme had the opportunity to access several collections in October 2018 in order to preserve the content and make it easily accessible for scholars and other interested parties.

It is against this relatively rich literary backdrop that we find a local print shop, which printed texts typographically for the Palembang market, and at least one lending library, which were both run around the turn of the twentieth century. Ulrich Kratz has made some concise but interesting comments about a manuscript rental shop, focusing on two manuscripts that originated from the 1880s, and a few years later the same scholar published a detailed description of the rental manuscripts in the small Palembang collection procured by the German scholar and trader Hans Overbeck in the 1920s. The

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6 Proudfoot 1995.
7 See Fasseur 1976.
8 See Groot 2009, 289 for more information about the issues surrounding the Dutch colonial press and the Batavian Society.
11 Drewes 1977, 198-244.
14 The DREAMSEA Programme is a programme carried out by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (CENSIS) at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) in Jakarta and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures in the University of Hamburg, funded by Arcadia, to digitise endangered manuscripts in South-east Asia. For more information about the digitised manuscripts in Palembang, see <https://dreamsea.co/>, accessed on 30 January 2021.
15 Proudfoot 1982.
16 Kratz 1977.
17 Kratz 1980.
manuscripts in this collection will be discussed in more detail in this paper in an attempt to establish how they may have been customised to serve as one collection to be rented out to the general public, as the manuscripts have similar characteristic features that may have been added later. I argue that by adding characteristics concerned with their layout and binding, an anonymous cultural entrepreneur seems to have given the collection a similar appearance that is easy to recognise as belonging to him or her. In turn, this infuses the manuscripts with the agency to attract a certain clientele interested in borrowing them. These plans obviously failed, though, as the local entrepreneur sold the collection to Overbeck in the 1920s. Overbeck stated that the manuscripts originated from a Malay lending library that was forced to close down because there were not enough readers who used it.19

This Palembang lending-library collection is also of particular interest because a few of the manuscripts contain lists (albeit concise ones) with the names of those who borrowed them and several other details.19 I will start with a short description of the physical appearance of the manuscripts and continue by focusing on a certain model of illumination, the deluxe leather bindings and what we can conclude from the names mentioned in the bindings of some of the manuscripts.

The collection

Overbeck’s collection of manuscripts from Palembang, which are now part of the National Library of Indonesia’s collection, comprise seven original Malay manuscripts that mainly contain narratives related to the Javanese narrative tradition used in the shadow-play repertoire. With reference to the detailed description of the individual texts in the manuscripts provided by Kratz and observations I made about the collection,20 it is possible to make three subdivisions within this collection to gain a better understanding of the provenance and use of the manuscripts: ML 513 and ML 516 as group one, ML 506, 508(b), 514, 515 and 517 as group two, and ML 508(a&c) as the third sub-group.

In his earlier article about the lending library in Palembang,21 Kratz focused on the manuscripts encoded as ‘ML 513’, *Hikayat Galuh Digantung*, and ‘ML 516’, *Hikayat Tumenggung Ario Wonggo*, items copied in the 1880s and previously owned by two brothers, Kemas Abdul Hamid and Kemas Ali bin Kemas Hasan, who lived in Kampung 7 Ulu. The brothers wrote several ownership statements in Arabic and Latin script on the flyleaves and endpapers of their respective manuscripts, which they signed. To these statements they added some rules for borrowers to follow. The rental price amounted to 10 cents a day except for Thursday nights,22 with a minimum rental period of one day (less would only damage the valuable asset – it was already turning black from soiling), while the middle of it was still clean – and the reader would not be able to finish the reading anyhow, so the owner stated). They were stipulated that relatives also needed to pay and that readers should take good care of the valuable items, the loss of which would have to be compensated by a charge of 20 guilders. Readers were not allowed to read the manuscript too close to an oil lamp or in the presence of small children [?]. In ML 516, another note was added to the almost identically formulated admonitions: ‘A note to all of you: if you want to rent [borrow] this tale, you may visit [me to borrow it]. If I don’t know you [already], you should bring some proof [of identity] with you. If you don’t bring any, don’t be cross with me, but you won’t get it. Just so you know’.24 These admonitions were further highlighted in two almost identical *syair* (rhymed narrative structures) added at the beginning of the texts, which was a fairly common practice for rental manuscripts.25

What is of particular interest here is that both manuscripts were luxuriously bound in leather in an Islamic way that was

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22 Thursday nights are believed to be auspicious in the Islamic world, as it is possible to have one’s prayers answered. Perhaps this is the reason no fee was charged. The text on the flyleaf of ML 513 reads: *malam juma’at tidak masuk sewah jika siang mesti masuk sewah* (‘No fee will be charged on Thursday nights, but during the day a fee must be paid’).

23 The Malay text on the flyleaf of the front cover of manuscript ML 516 reads: *Dan lagi saya // pesan kalau maca tida’ sampai habis tida’ // usa sewa ini surat sebab rusa’ sa // ya punya barang mulanya suda hitam // keterangan // boleh datang tetapi kalau belum kenal hendaklah tuan // bawa’ keterangan kalau tidak // cetak rapat kata saya mesti tidak dapat supaya tu’a’*.

24 The Malay text on one of the first pages of manuscript ML 516 reads: *dikasih ta’u kepada tuan sekalian kalau mau’ // boleh datang tetapi kalau belum kenal hendaklah tuan // bawa’ keterangan kalau tidak // cetak rapat kata saya mesti tidak dapat supaya tu’a’*.

25 Kratz 1977 quotes the text of this *syair* along with a comparison between the two versions. See Chambert-Loir 2013 on the use of *syair* in the rental manuscript in the Fadli collection from Batavia.
Another striking similarity is that the opening pages of the prose text in ML 513 and the syair in ML 516 are enclosed in comparable double-lined frames. The distinction between the manuscripts is that the former is adorned with a rather abstract floral pattern as a headpiece (Fig. 2) and the latter seems to be unfinished, as the space reserved for a possible similar pattern was left blank (Fig. 3). The aforementioned characteristics – the names of the (original) owners, their statements on the flyleaves, the bindings and headpieces – clearly mark these two manuscripts as being one subdivision of the collection. The characteristic of being bound in quite expensive leather bindings with decorated headpieces of the two facing pages at the start of the manuscript is shared with almost all of the other manuscripts in this collection. This brings us to the second sub-group of this collection, which comprises the following five manuscripts: ML 506 Hikayat Maharajah Boma, ML 508(b) Hikayat Bambang Tok Sena, ML 514 Hikayat Pendawa Lebur, ML 515 Hikayat Pendawa Lebur and ML 517 Hikayat Indranata. These manuscripts form one group united by the similar floral pattern of the headpieces in the two facing pages at the beginning of four manuscripts, with the exception of ML 515, which has a slightly different illumination. It seems very clear that one artist was responsible for all of these illuminated headpieces, as an identical palette of watercolours was used consisting of blue, red, yellow, grey and brown, and the patterns, which are very European in style, are very similar to each other (Figs 4–7). Furthermore, the calligraphically designed first word of the text – al-kissah (“the story”) – is identical in each of these manuscripts. The examples of this word in ML 514 and ML 517 are clearly written in the same hand (Figs 6 and 7).

The latter manuscripts (ML 514 and ML 517) are more closely connected through their former owner, who inscribed his name on them: Muhammad Safi’i, Kampung 9 Ulu. He rented out the manuscripts under similar conditions as those mentioned in the ones owned by the two brothers in Kampung 7 Ulu in the 1880s. These two manuscripts stand out from the others because they include a short list of borrowers’ notes...
Fig. 4: ML 506, *Hikayat Maharajah Boma* with clearly a different hand on the first page and an embellished and rubricated al-kissah.

Fig. 5: ML 508(b), *Hikayat Bambang Tok Sena*, with the illuminated facing pages of the opening.

Fig. 6: ML 514, headpieces of the *Hikayat Pendawa Lebur*.

Fig. 7: ML 517, illuminated facing pages of the *Hikayat Indranata*.

serving as flyleaves in the manuscript ML 514 (see below for a discussion of these), while the other manuscript (ML 517) has a puzzling feature: the ornamentation on its blue leather covers has been cut out (Fig. 8). One possible reason for this is that the owner or someone else wanted to reuse these tooling ornaments for another book, but it is highly unusual nonetheless.

The dates when the copies were completed or those mentioned in the ownership statements of all five items in this sub-group, 1903 (ML 506), 1916 (ML 508(b)), 1906 (ML 514), 1903 (ML 515) and 1908 (ML 517), indicate that the lending library was in operation in the first few decades of the twentieth century. The characteristics enumerated for grouping these five items together indicate quite clearly that these manuscripts were indeed part of one homogeneous collection. However, there are a few other characteristics that complicate this picture. First of all, there are only two manuscripts that include statements of ownership by Muhammad Safi’i of Kampung 9 Ulu. The other items in this sub-group lack any indication of ownership, but they do contain some other data that tells us something about their provenance. ML 506 provides us with a detailed – and interesting – copying history of the text, as the scribe wrote his name, Muhammad Akip of Kampung 23 Ilir, on every twentieth page of the manuscript along with a number to indicate he had copied another twenty pages that day. In conjunction with the colophon at the end of the text (page 390), these notes indicate that Muhammad Akip bin
almarhum (the late) Muhammad Asim bin almarhum paduka nenenda Marewa finished the copying in the month of Rajab 1321 (September–October 1903 CE). On a few pages we also find another name written in the right-hand margin, combined with the date of 15 March 1918 in one instance, which is possibly an indication that the manuscript had changed hands that day (Fig. 9). There are more scribbled notes in the margins of some of the other pages as well, one of which reads 4 Oeloe (Ulu), a designation of the Kampung where the (new?) owner lived.

What is far more intriguing than the illegibility of these names, though, is the clearly different hand that started writing the text of ML 506 (Fig. 4). This calligraphy evidently was not done by Muhammad Akip, who carried out the rest of the copying. The most significant feature that ties these items into the same sub-group is the inclusion of a similarly designed and coloured headpiece in the opening pages of four manuscripts. The owner of two items (ML 514 and ML 517) wrote down his name, but the other manuscripts do not have any such proof of ownership in them. Now, here in ML 506, we encounter Muhammad Akip as the copyist of practically all the text in the manuscript except for page one, which was written by another scribe. We can only speculate about the reason why the scribe stopped writing after finishing the first page under the headpiece, or possibly even adding the writing at a later stage, but the catchwords at the bottom of page one were repeated by Muhammad Akip as the first words of the next page, showing that the text continues without any disruption.

The last item belonging to this sub-group 2, ML 508(b), is part of a multiple-text manuscript containing three different texts that were put together at a later stage. Based on the type of illumination seen on the opening pages, texts (a) and (c) may be grouped together (Figs 10 and 11), while text (b) evidently can be ascribed as belonging to the group discussed above. The three texts in this manuscript comprise a two-page syair about a visit by the Javanese vice-president of an Islamic organisation for trade and religion and an anecdote about one of its members (text a), an unfinished copy of the Hikayat Bambang Tok Sena (text b), and a copy of the Hikayat Raden Gandawarya (text c). The three texts were copied in different hands and state different years of copying and/or indications of ownership.

Text (a) may be connected to the establishment of a local branch of Sarekat Islam, the Islamic trade and political organisation, in the 1910s. It mentions 14 Rabiulawal 1332 (10 February 1914 CE) as the date of the Javanese vice-president’s visit and, interestingly, fills the headpiece with information on where the syair could be procured: ‘Whoever wants to buy the Syair Syarikat Islam can come to Mr Haji Khatib’s shop at Kampung Sekanak Sungai Tawar’. The unfinished text (b) is concluded with the following ownership statement: ‘The mark of this tale (alamat hikayat) of Kiagus Haji Agus bin Kiagus Abang of Kampung 2 Ulu, [who] was able to buy it from the Chinese named Baci in Kampung 4 Ulu on 15 Jumadilawal 1334’. This is a clear indication of the involvement of local elite and Chinese members of the population in Malay literary practices, something that has

27 The Malay text reads: siapa // suka mau’ beli syair // Syarikat Islam boleh dating di // toqoh [sedekah?] Ci’ Haji Khatib Kampung Sekanak Sungai Tawar. The reading of toko (‘shop’) is uncertain; it seems to say sedekah (‘alms’); see Kratz 1980, 93 as well.

28 The Malay text reads: ‘alamat hikayat Ki Agus Haji Agus bin Ki Agus Abang // Kampung 2 Ulu perigi kecil[?] dapat beli sama orang // Cinah nama Baci Kampung 4 Ulu adanya // Tanggal 15 Jumadilawal tahun 1334 (19 March 1916 CE; the year may also be read as 1337n, which would yield 16 February 1919 CE).
also been noticed with respect to the clientele of the Fadli lending library in Jakarta. The third text, (c), concludes with a colophon stating that a certain Kemas Ahmad in Kampung 3 Ulu finished composing the tale at half past five on Saturday afternoon, 3 Jumadilawal 1336 H (14 February 1918 CE). The paper on which texts (b) and (c) are written has six holes punched near the middle of the folio, indicating that these manuscripts had been joined in a previous binding. These elements show that the manuscripts were revamped, obviously in Palembang prior to their acquisition by Overbeck in the 1920s.

One manuscript belonging to sub-group 2 of the collection remains to be discussed, which again is similar, but has a few distinct features of its own. This is ML 515, which contains the Malay translation from a Javanese tale entitled *Hikayat Pendawa Lebur*, on folio-sized paper in a brown leather binding with tooling and an envelope flap. The beginning of the text in the manuscript is also embellished with illuminated headpieces, but different colours have been used and it is designed like a banyan tree (*waringin*), representing the tree of life in heaven, as the caption under the headpiece explains in addition to naming the title of the tale (Fig. 12). The text starts with a *syair* in two columns divided by two vertical lines, which informs the reader that the author translated the tale from Javanese and briefly states the content of the tale. The text, which spans more than 440 pages, shows quite a few embellished or otherwise highlighted punctuation words marking a new section of the text. Such visually enhanced words are quite common in Malay manuscripts and seem to become more decorative in the manuscripts in the Batavia lending-library collection, although perhaps less frequently in the Palembang manuscripts discussed here. The text ends in a triangular-shaped colophon in which the scribe identifies himself as Tahir bin Ali from Kampung 19 Ulu. He states that he finished the copying on 7 Ramadhan 1321 H (27 November 1903 CE). He also adds that if family members and friends wish to ‘use’ (*memakai*) the tale, they should come to his home, where they should also return it. A few pages after this colophon, which contain a *syair*, Nong bin Syam from Kampung 11 Ulu signed his name as the new owner of the manuscript in 1909. On the flyleaf of the back cover, we find a note in blue pencil stating that Usuf and Abdul Hamit, both of Kampung 8 Ulu, rented out the manuscript. Unfortunately, no more details about the date or year are mentioned.

The text in this manuscript clearly relates to most of the others in this small collection and so does the layout and binding. As in some of the other items in this collection, we find proof of a change of ownership here, indicating that manuscripts were valuable items that were traded within the local community. There is also proof of borrowing by an individual whose residence was quite near the owner’s home, as we may surmise that Usuf and Abdul Hamit borrowed the manuscript from Nong bin Syam. As mentioned earlier, lists with names of borrowers were also included in the manuscript. This is a point that will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

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30 Kratz 1980, 93.
31 The relationship between the texts in manuscripts ML 514 and ML 515, which have been ascribed the same title, require further research. Making reference to Drewes, Kratz mentions a five-volume manuscript, which complicates the issue even more (1980: 95–96).
Borrowers' notes

The sources of our knowledge about the existence and daily affairs of lending libraries in the Malay world stem from the collections procured by colonial officials looking for study materials for the libraries of their home institutions. For them the manuscripts from lending libraries may have been a last resort, a possible desperate catch in their quest to find written materials about and produced by people in the Malay world. These were not the richly decorated manuscripts from the palace tradition or exquisitely adorned religious manuscripts – the manuscripts in these collections, which some colonial officials did buy eventually, were ephemera to be used and then discarded like newspapers or other such short-lived media. Fortunately, the proprietor and manager of the Fadli collection in Batavia decided to sell his collection to officials of the Batavian Society and did so in two batches in 1889 and 1899 respectively. A few other manuscripts once owned by small-time entrepreneurs made their way into the repositories of the institutions in a much more random and individual manner, mostly through the legacies of scholars such as Hermann Neubronner an der Tuuk, Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and Richard James Wilkinson.

The most obvious indication that a manuscript was meant to be rented out in its former life was admonitions and regulations added by the owner, who might have copied or bought the manuscripts for the purpose of making a living. The owner would clearly state his or, sometimes, her name in a note on the flyleaf of the manuscript along with some details about how to handle the valuable object, where to return it and how much it would cost per day. Such signed statements may be repeated quite frequently and highlighted in syair form at the beginning or end of the text in the manuscript, as we also find in the manuscripts from Palembang. The frequency of such statements – or simply Muhammad Bakir’s signature in the manuscripts he copied for his rental business – suggest that he rented the manuscripts by the quire rather than as individual bound objects. Borrowers were cautioned to handle the manuscripts with care, as they were the assets of their owner. The entrepreneur and copyist Muhammad Bakir was quite brutal in voicing the spells he issued in his manuscripts to punish wrongdoers, threatening them with a number of diseases if they damaged his manuscripts. Lending out manuscripts from their home in Kampung 7 Ulu, Palembang in the 1880s, the two brothers Kemas Ali and Kemas Abdul Hamid also warned people not to write in them, as these were already deteriorating due to the usual wear and tear caused by all the borrowers.

These warnings were intended to prevent such damage to the manuscripts. The general lack of notes, comments or other marks by the users in the preserved manuscripts might suggest that readers were obedient followers of the rules, but many other factors may also be added as reasons for the lack of marginalia. The admonitions by the owners do seem to suggest that there was a common practice of sorts, namely

33 Chambert-Loir 2013.
35 See Putten 2017, 191.
36 The Malay text in pencil on fol. 2r of ML 516 reads as follows: Dan lagi saya kasih ta’u kala sewa janganlah tuan // kasih tulisan pada ini kayat suda keruskannya orang sewa // dia tulis di sini jadi rusak orang punya barang // dia bikin gampang punya orang tidak pikirkan punya orang // kala rusak sekarang saya pesan dengan sebetulnya.
using blank spaces in manuscripts for doodles, scribbles or other purposes. The fact that these are rarely or no longer found in the preserved manuscripts may be due to their reduced attractiveness for collectors in the past, as the manuscripts would fetch a lower rental or selling price. It may be that active copyists such as Muhammad Bakir would make a new, ‘clean’ copy of the text to keep it attractive for their clientele and discard the old, ‘tainted’ duplicate of the text.

Although readers’ scribblings are rare, it is even rarer to find notes in which readers wrote down their opinion about what they had read as a service to the next borrower in a pre-modern, ‘Good reads’ fashion. This makes Rasyimah’s note – found in a copy of the Hikayat Syah Firman circulating in the town of Tanjungpinang in Riau in 1863 – so unique:

‘Hikayat Tuan Puteri Nur Lelah was borrowed by Rasyimah on the fourth day of Rabiulawal in the Dutch year 1863 and was read for two nights. Just before the third night it was returned’.38

Occasionally we do come across names of borrowers and possibly dates when they borrowed the items. Adding notes of this kind would have been part of the library’s user management policy or general records and such lists would probably not have been kept together with each manuscript or been part of it. The inclusion of these notes may have been caused by the need for paper for repairing or rebinding the manuscript. Possibly the paper contained old notes that had already served their purpose and could be discarded, or indeed were included in the manuscript on purpose so that the records were kept with the item. Whatever the reason for their inclusion, in ML 514, one of Muhammad Safi’i bin Muhammad Saleh’s manuscripts, we can find notes comprising borrowers’ names, places of residence and sometimes a year and date and the title of the text added on the folio pages that form the connection between the book block and the back cover of the manuscript (Figs 13 and 14). There are at least twelve people who signed their names and stated their place of residence on the paper during a period of 19 months between the first and last date mentioned in these statements (29 Rabiulawal 1328 – 20 Sawal 1329; 10 March 1910 – 14 October 1911 CE). All of them were males living in the south end of the town (ulu), near but not in the same kampung as the owner in Kampung 9 Ulu. One of the clients may have left us with some more personal data than just his name, as he seems to have signed the ‘register’ twice, once in Latin characters that state his name as Toeher Soedoe. He rented the Hikayat Pendawa Lebur for two nights and ‘may want to

38 Quoted from Mulaika Hijjas 2017, 233.
read it again, a note says. The other note is in modified Arabic script (Jawi) and is easier to read: ‘My name is Tuhir. [I live] in the town of Palembang, in Kampung 13 Ulu, [a] respected [person?] in Semarang.’ The list is proof that the manuscript was borrowed more or less on a regular basis in a very local area and did not cross the Musi River, which flows through the city of Palembang. In fact, apart from the copyst of ML 506, who identified himself as Muhammad Akip of Kampong 23 Ilir, all the people who were either (former) owners or borrowers of the manuscripts can be traced to one of the Ulu neighbourhoods. This emphasises the restricted area of circulation of the manuscripts and the closeness of the relationships between the owners and borrowers.

Epilogue

The manuscripts and the information that can be garnered from them give us some insight into the reading culture of an urban centre in the Dutch East Indies around the turn of the twentieth century. Most of the texts in these manuscripts are Malay renderings of Javanese narratives connected to the shadow-theatre repertoire. All of the manuscripts show signs of intensive use, which suggests heavy borrowing and frequent reading. The German scholar and businessman Hans Overbeck reportedly acquired the lending library’s manuscripts in one purchase in Palembang in the 1920s.

Statements in the manuscripts indicate their ownership by different individuals in a variety of neighbourhoods in the town of Palembang over a period ranging from 1883 to 1918. Despite this diversity, the manuscripts show conspicuous similarities in terms of their layout, illumination and binding, which turns the items into quite a homogeneous manuscript collection. One possible cause for such homogeneity is that an indigenous, anonymous entrepreneur in Palembang acquired the seven manuscripts from their respective owners and made the items part of a single collection that his customers would recognise easily. If this line of reasoning is indeed valid, then the new owner infused the manuscripts with a certain agency to offer them to people living in his vicinity as a portfolio with the new owner infused the manuscripts with a certain agency that his customers would recognise easily. If this line of reasoning is indeed valid, then the items part of a single collection that his customers would have been to include it, the list shows in a concrete and almost tangible way a community of readers who all lived at the south end of town, very near the original owner of the manuscript. It also provides the clearest indication of how this one manuscript brought a small community of readers together who shared the experience of borrowing and reading it. I suggest that the agency apparently contained by this manuscript is also valid for the whole collection of seven manuscripts, which connected interested people in Palembang and made them into a reading group, giving them a similar experience of sharing the same texts which, conventionally, were read out loud in front of one’s family and friends.

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Baiben Zhang (Hundred Volumes Zhang): A Scribal Publisher in Nineteenth-century Beijing

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Introduction

The scholarly narrative of literary production in late imperial China is dominated by print. Studies of publishing from the Song (960–1279) to the Qing (1644–1911) dynasty have shed much light on the social and cultural impacts of commercial woodblock printing, and have mapped the book trade from both the sides of production and reception. Yet the enduring market for handwritten books, and their copious production outside of elite circles, remains little inspected. This article explores a special corner in this field: the commercial production of entertainment literature by a prolific scribal publisher of late Qing Beijing.

Early twentieth-century collectors in the Beijing area noticed the name ‘Baiben Zhang’ (Hundred Volumes Zhang) because it was ubiquitous. The shop, which produced manuscripts of texts spanning the range of northern genres of popular performing literature, belonged to a milieu of establishments in the city specialized in producing handwritten books of stories and songs for sale. Among the vast collection of books gathered by the Academia Sinica from the Beijing area during the Republican era (1912–1949), there were thousands of manuscripts produced by Baiben Zhang. There is also evidence to suggest that, among the two major collections of performance literature from Qing Beijing that became dispersed in the mid-1920s, the Chewangfu 車王府 (Mansion of Prince Che) and Shengpingshu 昇平署 (Court Theatrical Bureau) collections, significant numbers of manuscripts originally came from the last role of manuscript culture in facilitating access to books and its continued presence in the lives of readers (McDermott 2006, 43–82). Writing on an earlier period, Christopher Nugent discusses the market circulation of poetry manuscripts in the Tang dynasty (618–907) (Nugent 2011, 214–221).


2 Joseph McDermott, while arguing for the ascendance of printed books over manuscripts in the Yangzi delta in the sixteenth century, emphasizes the potential ambiguities of the term ‘commercial publisher’ in the case of print publishing, see Chia 2002, 6–7 and McDermott 2015, 112–115. I employ the term ‘entertainment literature’ to refer to a wide range of literature spanning the genres of drama and storytelling. The term has the benefit of not discriminating against social classes. I am inspired here by a conversation with Wilt Idema (6 July 2017, Leiden), who suggested the term in lieu of ‘popular literature’.

3 By ‘commercial production’ I refer to the systematic production of books for sale on the open market, which in this case can be clearly established from Baiben Zhang’s extant manuscripts, including sales catalogs. On the formal ambiguities of the term ‘commercial publisher’ in the case of print publishing, see Chia 2002, 6–7 and McDermott 2015, 112–115. I employ the term ‘entertainment literature’ to refer to a wide range of literature spanning the genres of drama and storytelling. The term has the benefit of not discriminating against social classes. I am inspired here by a conversation with Wilt Idema (6 July 2017, Leiden), who suggested the term in lieu of ‘popular literature’.

4 See ‘Xumu 序目’, in Li Jiarui 1933, 5. Li recorded ‘over 3000 varieties’ (sanshian yu zhong 三千餘種) of Baiben Zhang manuscripts collected from the Beijing area. The term zhong suggests titles instead of volumes (there could be multiple volumes to a title). On the Academia Sinica collection, see note 45 and Appendix 1.
Baiben Zhang and similar outlets. The sheer quantity of manuscripts of commercial origin from a single area should draw our attention to their social and geographic context, as well as to the handwritten mode of production that made them available to readers and collectors.

Modern notions of publishing, in Chinese as in Japanese, are informed by strong associations with printing, as suggested by the very term chuaban 出版 (‘to publish’) in reference to the printing block. But if one takes a more encompassing view of publishing as a process by which texts are made available to communities of readers, the scribal medium facilitated the propagation of a variety of literature in late imperial times. Just as manuscripts constituted a desired medium for distributing literature within exclusive coteries, so handwritten copies made a variety of entertainment literature available to wider communities of readers. A recent survey of the extant corpus of youth books (zidi shu 子弟書), a genre of verse narrative popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century north China, has highlighted the overwhelming proportion of handwritten texts in this genre in comparison with printed ones, while shedding light on a niche market for this literature dominated by Beijing’s scribal producers. The findings signal a large commercial landscape for the production of manuscripts in other genres of Chinese vernacular literature as well, whose detailed terrains remain to be explored.

The shops that produced handwritten books of entertainment literature in Qing Beijing were many and varied. Probably the most scholarly attention has been given to the lending shops of the late Qing that made a business of renting books of drum ballads and court-case fiction, exclusively hand-copied and catering to daily reading. An early study by Li Jiariu has described the rental of manuscripts at so-called ‘steamed bun shops’, whose exact

5 The Chewangfu collection comprises a massive corpus of plays, ballads and fiction that surfaced in the second-hand book market of Republican-era Beijing, and that came into public attention when the books were acquired in large numbers by Beijing’s Kongde Xuexiao 孔德學校 (a secondary school named after the French philosopher Auguste Comte) in 1925 for its library. The precise identity of ‘Prince Che’ remains debated among scholars. On the provenance of this corpus, see Huang 2008, 140–151; for an overview of twentieth century Chinese scholarship on it, see Miao 2002. Huang Shizhong relates that, among some 285 manuscripts from this corpus which he studied at Peking University, a number bear traces of Baiben Zhang stamps that have been washed out incompletely, and he suggests that a larger number of them originally came from Baiben Zhang and other shops (Huang 2008, 149–51). As Huang’s survey is limited to one genre (zidi shu), just what proportion of all the manuscripts in the Chewangfu corpus has commercial origins is a subject that has yet to be investigated.

6 See Love 1993, 35–37, on ‘publish’ in the sense of ‘making public’ (restoring an older meaning of the term), which is central to his conceptualization of ‘scribal publication’ in seventeenth-century England. In his pioneering work, Love categorized scribal publication into three kinds – ‘author publication,’ ‘entrepreneurial publication’ (‘copying manuscripts for sale by agents other than the author’) and ‘user publication’ (non-commercial replications) (Love 1987; 1993). In this scheme, the entrepreneurial productions that are the focus of this study make up only one form of scribal publication. Love does not make a case for quantity, but the large numbers of extant manuscripts from Baiben Zhang provide food for thought on this topic as well.


9 Lu 2018. It remains to be seen whether the youth book was a special case. For comparison, one might look at the drum ballad (guci 鼓詞), another popular northern genre for which Beijing was a major center of production in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the texts did circulate locally through a variety of manuscripts, in this case their print production across varied locations (in the form of woodblock imprints and lithographs) was more substantial, judging by numbers of extant titles (see Wan 2020, 22, 34–38, 49–53).

10 On Beijing’s lending shops, see Li 1936; Zhang 1996b, 448–451; Shahar 1998, 125; Pan 1999; Cui 2017, 231–241; and Wan 2020, 36–37. There were also lending shops that rented out hand-copied novels in Fuzhou and Canton in the early 1800s; see McDermott 2006, 96–98.
nature remains contested; dates on extant manuscripts suggest that they were a popular phenomenon of the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century.\(^\text{11}\) But lending shops were far from the only kind of scribal businesses that existed in late Qing Beijing. From around the same period, many other venues offered manuscripts of entertainment literature for sale. The impressive variety of their offerings can be discerned from extant books of popular songs, prosimetric stories, and various regional operas bearing the stamps of these establishments.\(^\text{12}\) Together they corroborate the existence of a thriving market for handwritten books nourished by the vibrant cultures of musical and theatrical entertainment in nineteenth-century Beijing.

In this study, the term ‘scribal publisher’ is used to describe Baiben Zhang and other venues that sourced, produced, and sold handwritten copies of entertainment literature, which can be ascertained on the basis of evidence from their manuscript products. By being responsible for this entire chain of activities, they were veritable publishers, whose range of products suggest not one but multiple clienteles. By being responsible for this entire chain of activities, they were veritable publishers, whose range of products suggest not one but multiple clienteles with varying needs, purchasing powers, and interests in the entertainment offerings of Qing Beijing. In the sense that their books were produced through organized scribal production, they were also ‘copying houses’. While I also refer to them as ‘shops’, in recognition of their commercial nature, they are to be distinguished from bookshops that solely stocked and sold books; as we will see, the sales of manuscripts took place at regular temple markets as well as at the shops. Baiben Zhang is chosen as the focus of this first study for having the richest sources in extant manuscripts and anecdotal literature; further study of the vast corpus of extant manuscripts may reveal multiple kinds of scribal enterprises and business models.

The story of Baiben Zhang is one intimately linked to a place in time. This article thus begins with portrayals of Baiben Zhang in anecdotal accounts, and the world of temple fairs with which it is remembered by contemporaries and later collectors. In the absence of dates on the manuscripts themselves, these sources help to establish the shop’s flourishing in nineteenth-century Beijing while breathing imagination into the figure of its proprietor Zhang. Proceeding from literary sources to manuscript objects, this article next presents Baiben Zhang as a full-fledged business. Stamps and catalogs provide glimpses into practices from branding and sales to scribal production; the variety of extant products points to the scribal publisher’s participation in multiple entertainment cultures. The article concludes with reflections on Baiben Zhang the shop, its business model, and the factors that contributed to its success in an age commonly perceived to be dominated by print.

Part 1, Baiben Zhang in anecdotal sources
At the beginning of a sales catalog, Baiben Zhang advertises its products in a plethora of entertainment genres: 13

This house specializes in copying [the scripts] of famous troupes performing [operas sung to the music of] kun and yi.

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11 In his early study (1936), Li Jiarui suggests that the ‘steamed bun shops’ (in Chinese: māntou pu 蒸饅頭館, or more colloquially, zhenggao pu 蒸鍋 舖) that rented out manuscripts of drum ballads and fiction were regular neighborhood shops that sold steamed buns. Zhang 1996b suggests rather that they were a different entity. In his account, they were shops that specialized in selling glutinous rice figurines (jiangmi mianren 江米麵人) of theatrical inspiration; he tells of storefronts in old times being decorated with banners inscribed with the names of opera scenes. At the door fronts, assortments of figurines clad in theatrical costumes were stuck all over the parapets on the city walls of a wooden model of the underworld city Fengdu 腐都. The model is known as a hushō loaci 喻食舖子 (‘house of offerings’—hushō refers to food for feeding the dead used in both Buddhist and Daoist rituals). The rental of manuscripts at these shops was initially a side business. The dated manuscripts from lending shops that were described by Li Jiarui date between the years 1862 and 1908. Zhang 1996b, 449, cites a passage from Yanshi jibī 燕市積弊 published in the Xuantong era (1909–1911) in the Jinghua xinbao京華新報 newspaper describing the popularity of lending shops, which suggests that they were still around at that time. Zhang suggests that they died out around 1926, a few years after the demise of Baiben Zhang and other shops, but provides no information on how he obtained these dates (Zhang 1996b, 451).

12 Many such manuscripts can be found in the Sokodo Bunko 雙紅堂 collection in the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 東洋文化研究所 at Tokyo University; they come from the former collection of the Japanese collector Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤現奎 also (1902–1980) (they are photo-reprinted in Huang and Ōki 2013). For a brief overview of the commercially produced manuscripts in this collection, see Huang 2011, 146–150.

13 The following text comes from Academia Sinica, ms Tj30-232, fols 1r–1v; the punctuation is mine. The manuscript has been rebound. The scholar Fu Xihuá 傅惜華 (1907–1970) cites the same ad on the first folio of a sales catalog from Baiben Zhang entitled Erhuáng xi múlù 二黃戲目錄 (Catalog of erhuáng opera) in his private collection (now at the Chinese National Academy of Arts 中国藝術研究院 in Beijing) (Fu 1954a, 319). The subject of sales catalogs such as these will be discussed in detail in the next part of this article.
erhuang, bangzi, and xipi; the bannermen’s ditties, [including] ganban and cuicha; linked tunes, lute songs, airs, port tunes, big-drum tales, the-lotus-falls, [as well as] scores, youth books of the eastern and western styles, and big books of ballads in Shi [Yukun] style.14 [The manuscripts] are true to price, and not sold for less; we do not fool our customers. Every seventh and eighth day, we are at the Eastern Stele Pavilion at the Huguo Temple; every ninth and tenth day, we are at the Ancestral Master’s Hall inside the Western Corner Gate of the Longfu Temple.15 Our house is located north of the East Little Alley, [which extends from] the Tall Well Alley, [which shoots off] the Main Street inside Xizhi Gate. Having been in operation for four generations, we are number one in the business, and our name is known far and wide.

Here is a picture of Baiben Zhang the business, with an impressive spectrum of literature that it copied and sold. Judging by the fact that at least one of the named genres did not evolve until the nineteenth century, the catalog would date to that time or later, when many forms of drama and storytelling flourished on the stages and streets of the capital.16 From extant catalogs, we know that a number of other shops similarly sold hand-copied books of songs and stories, though we know far less about them than about Baiben Zhang. The shop has left its traces not only on considerable quantities of extant manuscripts but also in a wealth of anecdotal sources: a mid-nineteenth-century guidebook to Beijing, a song about a trip to a temple fair, notes by two early twentieth-century collectors, and a compilation of miscellaneous accounts of the Qing. While colored by literary imagination, these sources together attest to the shop’s flourishing in the nineteenth century and provide telling glimpses into the urban world of entertainment to which it belonged.

The specificity with which Baiben Zhang gives its address in the ad calls us to first imagine it on a map (Fig. 1a). Qing Beijing was built on the Ming city, comprised of the Inner City with the Imperial City at its center and the Outer City to its south. In the mid-seventeenth century, the new Manchu regime reorganized Beijing demographically and politically, so that the Inner City would be dominated by the bannermen populations in its service, while non-Banner populations were relocated to the Outer City.17 Much of the city’s commercial activity became concentrated in the areas outside the Inner City’s three southern gates, and from the late seventeenth century onwards, playhouses clustered in these areas, with the neighborhood south of Xuanwu Gate in the western section of the Outer City becoming a hub of actors’ homes and entertainment activities.18 In close vicinity, Liulichang, with its many booksellers and publishers, emerged as a prominent center of the book trade by the late eighteenth century.19

Baiben Zhang’s home near Xizhi Gate, in the northwestern corner of the Inner City (Fig. 1b, enlarged detail), was curiously distant from these sites of commercial activity, while striking for its proximity to regular gatherings of amateur performances by Inner City bannermen.20 The earliest such gatherings are known to have existed in the Qianlong era (1736–1795), and these ‘clubs’ were important channels of entertainment in the Inner City, meeting in princely mansions and on temple grounds that afforded

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14 The list includes an assortment of musical genres in both drama and storytelling, as well as various types of tunes. Li 1933, which describes many of them, includes excerpts from texts contained in Baiben Zhang manuscripts. In the physical context of the books, these terms are perhaps best understood as labels or descriptions of types of products; I have seen a number of them on the title pages of manuscripts. Just how these products corresponded to performed genres will need further investigation.

15 ‘Every seventh and eighth day’ includes the seventh, eighth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth days of the month; likewise, ‘every ninth and tenth day’ includes six days of the month. These are the schedules of regular temple markets at the two temples.

16 The ‘big books of ballads in Shi Yukun style’ refer to a form of prosimetric storytelling that derives its name from the famed nineteenth-century Beijing storyteller Shi Yukun (石玉昆) (to be discussed in detail in the next section). ‘Big drum tales’ is another nineteenth-century genre of verse narrative. Fu dates the catalog in his collection to the end of the Qing (Fu 1954a, 321; see note 90).


18 On the neighborhood of Xuanwan 宣南 as a hub of actors’ homes, see Wang Zhengyao 2014, 68–90. From the late seventeenth into the late nineteenth century, the Qing court prohibited commercial playhouses from being established in the Inner City, but attempts at regulations were in part futile; theatrical activities found their way in, and bannermen, who were prohibited from attending commercial playhouses, frequently crept out. See Goldman 2012, 69–76.

19 See the articles in the special issue of East Asian Publishing and Society 7.2 (2017) on Liulichang and Qing book culture; also see Reed 2015. The classic study of Liulichang is Sun 1962.

20 Known as piaofang 票房, these were meetings where aficionados of music and theater performed for each other. ‘Amateur’ is used here not in the sense that performers were less skilled than professional actors and storytellers, but in the sense that they were not paid: to be invited to perform was rather an honor. In this regard, the term piaofang is to be distinguished from its present-day connotations of commercial performance and its modern meaning as ‘box office’. See Cui 2017, 243–274, which includes a discussion on amateur gatherings in modern-day Beijing.
Fig. 1a: The Inner City and Outer City. Lithographed map of Beijing, early 20th century. Private collection, Hamburg. Original size: 63 x 56 cm.
privacy and protection from state surveillance. Gatherings took place around performances of eight-cornered drum songs (bajiao gu 八角鼓) and youth books (zidi shu 子弟書), popular forms of storytelling entertainment in bannermen circles, while they also increasingly included performances of scenes from plays, spurred by the popularity of commercial theater and restricted access to them in the Inner City. The theatrical activities of these clubs reached their height in the late nineteenth century, with over a dozen new clubs having been established in the Guangxu era (1875–1908).\footnote{See Liang 2018, 14–18, which includes a map.}

Gatherings took place almost entirely in the western section of the Inner City, with a major cluster in its northwestern section – in close vicinity to Baiben Zhang. Located just south of Baiben Zhang’s home, the Huguo Temple (Huguo si 護國寺) was the site of one of the most important temple markets of Qing Beijing. The location must have made it convenient for the shop to transport its products to the fairs where it regularly sold its manuscripts. Along with the Longfu Temple (Longfu si 隆福寺) in the eastern part of the city, the Huguo Temple hosted markets on regular days of the month from the mid-eighteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century.\footnote{On the two temples and their fairs, see Naquin 2000, 29–31, 115, 629–632; Beijing shi dongcheng qu yuanlinju 2002, 253–268; see also Wei 2018 on the Longfu Temple and the world of commerce associated with it during the Qing and Republican eras.} On these occasions, which were popular outlets of commerce and entertainment for Inner City residents, people from all over mingled and all kinds of things were sold. The fairs were also important sites for the circulation of books, which as early as Ming times took place at floating markets throughout...
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the city. Being attached to the ritual calendar meant that the sales of manuscripts were part of a larger flow of commodities linked to shared cycles of cultural time and to the locality. In anecdotal sources, Baiben Zhang is almost always remembered in connection with the fairs.

The figure of a Mr. Zhang at the temple markets who hand-copied songs for sale appears in the nostalgic reminiscences of an elderly gentleman of Beijing, Xiaolianchi Jushi 小蓮池居士 (‘Gentleman of the Little Lotus Pond’), a collector of youth books at the turn of the twentieth century. The youth book was a genre of musical storytelling that flourished in Qing Beijing, associated with the city’s bannermen and performed at private amateur gatherings, as well as at teahouses and other sites of entertainment. Sometimes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they faded from performance, the texts came to be collected by readers with great nostalgia. In a preface to a collection of songs dated 1922, Xiaolianchi jushi recalls:

[... ] 諸子弟書始自韓氏，殆無不可，先生者，嘉道間嘗遊于京師東郊之青門別墅，所謂撾棒樓也者，所製曲，屢肆競為刴版。廟市有張姓，亦勸稿鈔鬻之。余兒時，都市猶不乏屢肆刊本，劇社亦間有歌之者。每一思維，青燈年來，長安惟垂桃李，此曲間無聞久矣。

[...] Thus it can be said that the genre of the youth book originated with Mr. Han. Sometime between the Jiaqing (1796–1820) and Daoguang reigns (1821–1850) the master had visited the Blue Gate Mansion in the eastern suburbs of the capital, which was known as the Cane House. As for the lyrics that he composed, Liulichang’s shops competed to print them. In the temple markets, there was a man of surname Zhang, who also sought out the texts, which he hand-copied and sold. When I was a boy, in the city markets there was no lack of woodblock-printed youth books from Liulichang’s shops, and at theatrical gatherings they were still occasionally sung. Every so often, I think back upon those days; since I have become an old man, people in the capital have cared for nothing but sensuous music. These songs have long been lost among men.

Mr. Zhang is remembered in connection with the songs of a bygone era, as one who hand-copied songs for sale while the shops of Liulichang competed to print them. In his time, the aging Xiaolianchi jushi was not the only one to remember the music and the books. His preface appears in an anthology of a hundred works in twenty fascicles, edited and compiled by a friend and fellow collector, Jintai Sanweishi 金台三畏氏 (‘The Thrice-Reverent One of the Golden Terrace’), another gentleman of Beijing. In his preface, Sanweishi expresses his gratitude to Xiaolianchi Jushi for letting him copy works from his collection, and relates the fate of his own collection of youth books, which had once numbered over one hundred but had in the meantime became dispersed during the sieges on the capital in the year 1900. The present anthology, he wrote, was the result of great efforts to reclaim a number of youth book texts as their author. The translated passage continues in this vein (‘Mr. Han’ refers to Han Xiaochuang). On the works attributed to this prolific early composer of youthbooks and questions surrounding his biography, see Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4468–4479.

23 Writing in the Wanli (1573–1620) era, Hu Yinglin 何應麟 (1551–1602) records book markets that gathered with the schedule of the metropolitan examinations and also took place on a monthly basis at the City God’s Temple in the western part of the city (see Hu 1958, 56).

24 Temple markets as sites of book distribution have yet to be more fully studied. The experiences of buying books at temple fairs appear in a number of anecdotal accounts by Qing literati: in his essay from the Qianlong era on Liulichang, Li Wenzao 李文藻 (1730–1778) records that book markets that gathered with the schedule of the metropolitan examinations and also took place on a monthly basis at the City God’s Temple in the western part of the city (see Hu 1958, 56).

25 While I employ the translation of ‘youth book’ for 子弟書子弟書 in this article (see Elliott 2001a, 279, note 1, on this interpretation), the genre has also been translated as ‘scions’ tale’ and ‘bannermen tale’ (see Goldman 2001 and Chiu 2018, respectively). Cui Yunhua suggests that the genre evolved at private amateur gatherings and was later adopted by professional performers and became more commercialized (Cui 2005, 92–97).

26 The preface begins with remarks on the musical origins of the youth book genre and proceeds to the writer Han Xiaoqiang 幹小强, who is cited in a number of youth book texts as their author. The translated passage continues in this vein (‘Mr. Han’ refers to Han Xiaoqiang). On the works attributed to this prolific early composer of youthbooks and questions surrounding his biography, see Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4468–4479.

27 Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4455. The italics are mine. The preface is signed ‘On the day of the Chongyang Festival in Autumn 1922, written by the Gentleman of the Little Lotus Pond at Hanyanmiao Studio, Shichahai’. 王漁洋 (1739–1806), reminiscences on the temple fairs at the Ciren Temple慈仁寺, which in their glory days in the early Daoguang era (1821–1850) was known as the Cane House. As for the temple fairs, there is a manuscript, Lütuang yinguan zidi shu baizhang zongma 綠棠吟舘子弟書百種總目 (Comprehensive catalog of a hundred youth books compiled by the Poetry Studio of the Green Pear Trees), is only partially extant; it is presently held at the Capital Library of China and comes from the former collection of Wu Xiaolong 吳曉濤 (1914–1995) (shelfmark yr 中 486).

28 As with Xiaolianchi Jushi, the real name of Sanweishi is unknown; Sanwei is his courtesy name and Lütang yinguan 綠棠吟館 (‘Poetry studio of the green pear trees’) is his studio name. ‘Sanwei’ 三畏 comes from Analects 16.8, ‘Confucius said, “The gentleman has three things he stands in awe of. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven, of persons in high positions, and of the words of the sages”’ 君子有三畏:畏天命,畏大人,畏聖人之言 (Watson 2007, 116). Jintai 金台 (‘golden terrace’) here refers to Beijing. Judging by his words in the preface, Sanwei had intended that the collection be printed, but this seems to have never happened.
the works. In the ‘Fanli’ 凡例 (Editorial principles) section, Sanweishi recalls:

是種詞曲在域，同以來，頗盛興一時，故前門外打磨
一帶鋪肆，多有刊板出售者。此外如東城之隆福寺，西
city、護國寺，有所謂百本張者，亦出售此項鈔本之書
目。自庚子兵燹以後，而鋪肆既相繼歇業，則百本張亦
香如黃鶴焉。…

Since the Xianfeng [1851‒1861] and Tongzhi [1862‒1874] reigns, this genre of songs was rather in vogue, and so many of the shops in the Damochang area outside of Qianmen had them carved and printed for sale. There was, in addition, the so-called ‘Baiben Zhang’ at the Longfu Temple in the eastern part of the city and the Huguo Temple in the western part of the city, who sold catalogs of hand-copied youth books. But ever since the sieges of the Gengzi year [1900], the shops of Liulichang shut down one after another, and Baiben Zhang was also gone like the yellow cranes …

This passage gives the most precise dates for Baiben Zhang in extant sources, linking the sales of manuscripts to the heyday of youth book performances in the late nineteenth century, and marking 1900 as a clear date for when it ceased. While it is ambiguous whether ‘Baiben Zhang’ refers to a person or a shop, the specificity with which Sanweishi recalls the sales catalogs suggests that he was intimately acquainted with the books. Like the account of Xiaolianchi Jushi, Sanweishi’s narrative subtly positions the manuscript-seller of the temple markets apart from the commercial print shops of the Outer City. It relates the abrupt decline of all to the fate of the city: rather than changes brought about by print technology, the reason later scholars often give for Baiben Zhang’s decline, these notes by a contemporary witness tell a different story.

Besides the reminiscences of these collectors, Baiben Zhang is mentioned in books from its own time. A lively narrative of shopping at a temple fair can be found in Wandering through the Huguo Temple, a youth book composed probably in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The song, which recounts a wealthy gentleman’s wanderings through the Huguo Temple on the day of a fair, takes the reader along for a dazzling tour of the objects, foods, and performances that he sees. There, the Zhang brothers make a curious appearance.

When [the gentleman] came to the Eastern Stele Pavilion and saw Baiben Zhang with books of tales and plays laid out, he perused them for a long time and said, looking at Zhang Da: ‘I’d like to order a copy of The Cases of Judge Shi, and also a copy of The Green Peony, just as if Shi Yukun had told the story.’

Zhang Da did not say anything and frowned;

items suggests that they were no longer part of the circulating entertainment literature.

29 The approximate date can be inferred from known biographical information about the text’s author, who is mentioned in the story itself to be Helufshi 鶴侶氏 (‘Mr. Companion to the cranes’), or Aisin Gioro Yigeng 義釩 (1809–1848), twelfth son of Prince Zhuang 嚴賡 (Manke 閒謀, 1763‒1826). On his life and other works, see Chen 2003b, 76‒77, Chiu 2018, 236‒257, and Huang-Deiwiks 2000, 65‒66. Guan 1991, 17, dates this text to the period spanning the Daoguang (1821‒1850) and Xianfeng (1851‒1861) eras.

30 Two skilful readings have highlighted the multi-media and multi-sensory nature of this marketplace, where performances and objects were likewise commodities (Keulemans 2014, 113‒124). This song has also been treated in Chiu 2019, 52‒53 and 276‒278; Wan 2020, 34‒36.

31 The Yellow Crane Tower (黃鶴樓), by Cui Hao 崔顥 (d. 754): ‘That man of old has already ridden white clouds away, / And here in this land there remains only Yellow Crane Tower. / The yellow crane, once it has gone, will never come again, / But white clouds of a thousand years go aimlessly on and on…’ (Owen 2000, 828).

32 The Cases of Judge Shi (緯綸世誼) was also gone like the yellow cranes …

33 Other skilful reading has highlighted the multi-media and multi-sensory nature of this marketplace, where performances and objects were likewise commodities (Keulemans 2014, 113‒124). This song has also been treated in Chiu 2019, 52‒53 and 276‒278; Wan 2020, 34‒36.
Then [the gentleman] saw Zhang Er beside him, with his display of clay figurines.

[The gentleman] said: ‘These figures have such exquisite expressions!

Only, if one were to bring them home to entertain the children, they’ll be beat up into a mash in no time.’

Zhang Er replied: ‘Why, even stone would fear being smashed – lest we mold the figures from iron!’

The gentleman said: ‘My goodness, I won’t be able to pick those up, they’d be much too heavy.’

The scene vividly portrays an encounter between the gentleman and the Zhang brothers. The man’s exchanges as he wanders through the temple market show that he was a regular there, but not always welcomed by proprietors, especially as he flaunts his wealth and worldly knowledge but fails to commit to purchasing. While the scene appears as part of a literary representation, we notice two things: the manuscripts and figurines were on display at a stall of sorts and sold side by side, and the gentleman came to a decision to ‘order copies’ (dingchao 定抄) of specific titles after perusing books on display – possibly model books or catalogs. The Cases of Judge Shi, of which the gentleman wanted a copy, belonged to a group of court-case stories that was widely popular in nineteenth-century Beijing, propagated through performances, handwritten copies, and printed books.34 The Green Peony was the title of a well-known martial arts novel that was widely printed during the same period, while the mention here of the famed Beijing storyteller Shi Yukun 石玉昆 (fl. Daoguang era, 1821‒1850) would rather seem to point to a prosimetric version of the story closely related to performance.35 Later in the narrative, the gentleman wanders to the stall of another bookseller, Tongletang 同樂堂 (‘House of mutual delight’), which, like Baiben Zhang, had ‘books of tales and plays’ (shuxi ben 書戲本) on display.36 There, the proprietor presents his client with two newly composed works by Helüshi, one of which is Wandering though the Huguo Temple. ‘These two new tales are rather witty’ (she liang hui xinshu dao huixie 这兩回新書到詼諧), pleads the proprietor eagerly.37 In the marketplace of books, a story that is new and up-to-date is apparently a desirable commodity.

The floating sites of the temple fair stalls and the image of Mr. Zhang the person are likewise evoked in an expanded edition of the popular nineteenth-century guidebook, Dumen jilie 都門紀略 (Records of the Capital), which introduced the sights and shops of the capital to sojourning merchants and other visitors.38 An entry ‘Baiben Zhang’ appears in a section on ‘Skills’ 技藝, amid a list of curiosities ranging from tooth-pulling medicine to wrestling performances:

34 The cases of Judge Shi are the subject of an early court-case adventure novel with a preface dated to 1798; on extant printed edition, which all date to the nineteenth century, see Ōtsuka 1987, 169–170. The stories were also the subject of plays and prosimetric performances in the Beijing area (see Zhao 1936 and Miao 1998a, 109–110; Wan 2009, Wan 2010, and Wan 2020, which also discuss The Green Peony). Just what kind of text is requested by the gentleman in this scene is a topic for investigation, as is the relationship between the varied media of performance, manuscript and print.

35 Wan 2009, 10–11, points out textual affinities between the novels The Green Peony and The Cases of Judge Shi. On nineteenth-century imprints of the former, see Wan 2009, 133; the appendix in the same book lists performance-related versions of the story, including two manuscripts containing drum ballad versions. In the context of the passage, the mention of the storyteller Shi Yukun seems to suggest that the story was also transmitted in the form of a Shi-style tale, a prosimetric genre of storytelling named after him (to be discussed in more detail later in this article). Shi’s biography remains sketchy despite his legacy as a storyteller; see Keulemans 2014, 65–95, on his legacy. Zhongguo qyi zhi 1999, 654, gives Shi’s dates as c.1797–c.1871.

36 The story divulges that the proprietor ‘newly added small pictures [in the books] in the hopes of striking it rich’ 近日他新添小畫想發財 (Suwenxue congkan vol. 398, 630), so he was selling illustrated books. It is not clear to me whether Tongletang’s books were hand-copied or printed.

37 Suwenxue congkan vol. 398, 630. The other work mentioned is The Worldly Fellow (Shidao ren 時道人), which like Wandering through the Huguo Temple portrays a man of many pretensions; for extant versions of this text, all of which are manuscripts, see Huang et al. 2012a, 420–421.

38 On Dumen jilie (original preface by Yang Jingting 楊靜亭 dated 1845), which was printed numerous times in the late nineteenth century, see Naquin 2000, 464–467; Mokros 2017, 149–154. The version I have consulted is an expanded edition, entitled Xinzeng Dumen jilie zaji 新增都門紀略, dated Tongzhi 4 (1865), printed by an unspecified Liulichang print shop; the line Liulichang shufang congban 琉璃廠書房藏板 (‘the blocks are kept by the print shop at Liulichang’) appears on the cover. It is digitized from the collection of the Staabsbibliothek zu Berlin. The punctuation in the Chinese text cited below is mine.
What this person sells are all trifles, yet in style and material they are just like the full-sized furniture of the city shops; made smaller in size after the likeness of the big objects, they are utterly exquisite. Though they are for the amusement of youths from well-to-do families, utmost thought has been put into their making. They are sold on display at the Eastern and Western Temples and in the Changdian area, among other places.

Here Mr. Zhang appears as a seller not of manuscripts, but rather of exquisite miniatures. The description of ‘youths from well-to-do families’ who purchased the objects for amusement is a particularly suggestive one. As a guidebook that boasts insider’s looks into the capital’s shops – and that thrives on its own fashioning of what is caché – its description probably contains a measure of exaggeration. At the same time, the passage reveals something about the status of the miniatures as collectibles; one may imagine the manuscripts to have had a similar status and clientele.

Still another account of Baiben Zhang can be found in the extensive anecdotal collection *Qing bai leichao* (A categorized compendium of miscellaneous accounts from the Qing dynasty), compiled in the Republican era, which gives a lively account of Zhang the man. He is the protagonist of an entry entitled ‘Niefen’ (Squeezing dough). The entire entry is translated below.\(^{40}\)

近畿所傳捏粉之術。匠心獨運。鬚眉畢現。雖油畫鉛畫
毛筆畫等。方之蔑如也。其法取麵粉一團。與求畫者對
案坐。目不轉瞬。私自於袖底捏其形狀。捏成。取出。
則面部上之一凹一凸。一紋一縷。無不纖微適合。擅此
技者。光緒朝為津人張姓。張初為人鈔錄戲曲。顧記聞
極博。能將各曲本互異之處。折衷改正。期於盡善而
止。以是得名。津人稱之曰百本張。

自百本張之號出。而其真姓名轉隱。後改學捏粉。精其
技。然性傲僻。非遇囊空爨絕。持金求之。不應也。時
天津巨富首推海張五。張一日踵門往訪。乞借五千金。
海張五拒之。張曰。君不應我。能無後悔乎。曰。何悔
之有。張退。乃依海張五之身量長短肥瘦。捏成一形。
置之通衢。而插草標於其首。曰。出賣海張五。過者驟
見之。以為真海張五也。即而視之。乃啞然失笑。詢其
價值。則以五千金對。少一文不售也。海張五素以財力
雄視一方。聞之。引為大辱。而又莫可如何。乃潛使門
客。如數購之。而與張言和焉。張晚年目盲。偶墮地。
折傷肢體。不能營舊業。遂困頓以死。

The art of ‘squeezing dough’ transmitted in recent times is a display of utmost skill. [The dough-artist can portray his subject] down to every strand of his brow and beard. Though there is oil painting, painting with pigments,\(^{41}\) and brush painting, they are all looked down upon by him. The way it is done is as follows: he takes a ball of flour and asks the client to sit across the table from him. Without looking down for a second, he squeezes the dough into the subject’s likeness covertly under his sleeves. When he is finished and takes out the figurine, there is not a single dent and bulge, line or crease on it that does not match exactly [the subject’s] face.

In the Guangxu era, one who was adept at this was a Mr. Zhang of Tianjin. In the beginning, he had copied operas for people, and was therefore extremely knowledgeable in all manners of things. He could reconcile and correct the differences among the various librettos to the point of perfection, and got his name from this; the Tianjinese called him ‘Hundred Volumes Zhang’.

Once the name ‘Baiben Zhang’ got out, his true name became obscure. Later on he switched his profession and learned to squeeze dough. He became adept in the art, yet being proud and aloof in his nature, he would not accede to pleas with cash unless he was depleted of funds and on the brink of starvation. At the time, Hai Zhang Wu [‘loaded Zhang Wu’] was the richest among the billionaires of Tianjin, and one day Zhang deigned to visit his door, imploring to borrow five thousand cash. Hai Zhang Wu refused. Zhang said: ‘So you don’t agree. Will you really not have any regrets?’ Hai Zhang Wu replied, ‘What can there possibly be to regret?’

Zhang left, and afterward he molded into shape a figure matching the height and girth of Hai Zhang Wu, which he stood up on the main thoroughfare with a straw sign stuck on its head that said, ‘Hai Zhang Wu for sale’. Passers-by, struck by it, took it to be the real Hai Zhang Wu; upon further

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\(^{39}\) Changdian 厂甸 can refer to a particular section of the Liulichang area or to Liulichang more generally.

\(^{40}\) Xu Ke 1917 (rpt. 1966), vol. 5, ‘Gongyi lei’ 工藝類 (Category on crafts), 44‒45. I have reproduced the division of the paragraphs in the Chinese text in accordance with the reprint, but have parsed them into sections in the English translation for smoother narrative flow.

\(^{41}\) Tentative translation of qianhua 鉛畫; it is not clear to me which technique it refers to and whether it comes from a Western artistic tradition (as oil painting does) or a Chinese one (as brush painting does). In premodern Chinese texts, qian 金 can refer to pigments used for the beautification of the face or for correcting documents.
examination, they would break into laughter. When asked the figure’s price, Zhang would reply ‘five thousand cash’, and would not sell it for a dime less. Hai Zhang Wu, who had dominated the land with the power of his wealth, found this tremendously humiliating when he heard about it, but could do nothing. He secretly sent a retainer to buy the figure for the asked price and made peace with Zhang.

Zhang became blind in his old age. On one occasion, he fell and broke his limbs. Being unable to maintain his livelihood, he died in poverty.

In this account, Mr. Zhang was the protagonist of a delicious story of a humble artisan who outwitted a rich man, possessed of perfect skill in his trade yet not making obeisance to wealth and power. The story, with its colorful characters and narrative flourishes, has the flavor of hearsay rather than historical fact. Given that in all the other sources, Baiben Zhang was located in Beijing, the compiler here most probably confused its proprietor with a contemporary of the same surname, Zhang Changlin 張長林 (courtesy name Mingshan 明山, 1826–1906) of Tianjin, who was a skilled maker of theatrical figurines. Just like the dough-artist recounted in the story, Zhang Mingshan was known to have possessed the skill of squeezing clay into the likeness of real persons while sitting across from them. His theatrical figurines were apparently collected by foreign visitors for high prices and displayed in museums; he was also said to have made ‘little portraits’ (小照) for people.

That the Qing bai leichao confused the two Zhangs, one from Beijing and one from Tianjin, probably has something to do with the fact that Baiben Zhang had at one point sold miniature figurines, as corroborated by the accounts in the youth book and in the guidebook Dumen jilie cited earlier. The art of making theatrical figurines was popular in many areas of China in the nineteenth century, both in Jiangnan and the north, and the existence of commercial workshops that produced both manuscripts and figurines is a topic that merits further exploration. Like figurines, manuscripts were handmade objects; while differing in their raw materials, the two trades shared a common connection with a world of entertainment, which generated continual demand for fine, handmade, collectable things.

While the Qing bai leichao anecdote tells the story of a proud artisan who had utter disregard for commerce, it can also be read as an ironic comment on the power dynamics of the urban marketplace. Whatever we might make of the story and the other anecdotes before it, we can observe a few things about Baiben Zhang the business: its links to the world of theater and storytelling performance; its life connected to the temple fairs; its urban, commercial setting; and its date in the mid- to late nineteenth century. While these sources provide rich food for the imagination, in the next part of the article we examine extant manuscripts for a glimpse of the real-life operations of Baiben Zhang. They go far beyond the figure of Zhang the man, real or imagined, to reveal a full-fledged business operation.

Part 2, The operations of a scribal publisher
Extant manuscript sources reveal Baiben Zhang to have been a leading producer in what was a highly competitive business of copying manuscripts of entertainment literature for sale. Thousands of manuscripts gathered during the Republican era, scattered among various collections in Asia today, attest to the quantity and variety of output from scribal producers of Qing Beijing. For all their wealth, the commercial origins of

42 The Qing bai leichao, first printed in the Republican era, was the product of a complex process of compilation. In the section on editorial principles preceding the main text, the compiler Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869‒1928) divulges that its sources ranged from his personal jottings to books in his private collection, and still to newspapers, which often did not record their sources in detail. Xu further noted that, ‘when it comes to what is chronicled, I do not dare to boast about the thoroughness of evidence, but have mostly made it a point that [stories] possess beginnings and endings’ 凡所記載。固不敢以考證精詳自詡。要以具有本末者為多。
44 Likewise, the topic of how traditional clay sculpture flourished alongside other varieties of portraiture from painting to photography merits further study. On portrait (painting) in the Ming and Qing, see Ruttenbeek 2017.
45 While the subject of collections merits a study of its own, a note is due on Beijing’s special place in this history. In the 1920s and 1930s, the city was a locus of activity among China’s elite, whose intense interest in the literary past outside of the canons was accompanied by active efforts to collect, on both institutional and private levels, diverse kinds of vernacular literature ranging from drama and fiction to folk songs and stories (see Hung 1985). In the collections that formed in this period, the antique book dealers of Liulichang played a major role. Baiben Zhang manuscripts were ubiquitous and appeared in many different collections. Notable figures to mention include Liu Fu 刘复 (Liu Bannong 劉半農) (1891–1934), who together with his assistant Li Jiuru 李家瑞 (1895‒1975) collected thousands of manuscripts from Baiben Zhang for the Academia Sinica (see Fu 1954, 329, prefaces in Liu and Li 1932 and in Li 1933, and Wang Fansen 1998, 124‒130; also see Bordahl 1999 and Zeng 2010 for general background on the collection, presently at the Fu Sinian Library at Academia Sinica in Taipei). Fu Xihua 付信華 (1907‒1970) and Wu Xiaoling 吴晓玲 (1914‒1995), both Beijing natives from a slightly later generation of scholar-collectors, privately
these manuscripts have not yet been systematically examined, while many of the books have lost their original appearance in the course of collection and preservation. With further study pending, this section of the article takes a first look into the operations of Baiben Zhang as a scribal publisher. Three aspects are examined: branding, sales, and scribal production.

Branding

That selling manuscripts of entertainment literature was a competitive business is attested by the variety of stamps branding the manuscript products. Stamping was a common practice for branding handcrafted goods, on manuscripts of commercial origin, a stamp bearing the name of the shop typically appears on the title page. In his early study, Fu Xihua had enumerated nine different kinds of stamp and stamp combinations from Baiben Zhang, the greatest variety among known shops. Several kinds of common stamps can be seen today. The most elaborate one is a rectangular stamp with the characters ‘Baiben Zhang’ in the middle.

**Fig. 2: Baiben Zhang manuscript, title page and back cover, Waseda University Library, Fūryō Bunko, bunko 文庫19 F400 Z79. Baiben Zhang stamps (red and black) appear in the center of the title page. To the left, from top to bottom, the written characters indicate ‘Song on opium’ (the title), ‘Moon over the West River’ (the tune), ‘Five hundred’ (the price).**

collected many Baiben Zhang manuscripts (their collections are kept today at the Chinese National Academy of Arts and the Capital Library of China, respectively). Finally, among Japanese sojourners to China in the Republican era, the notable Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 (1902–1980) collected many Baiben Zhang manuscripts (they are presently at the Sokodo Bunko at Tokyo University and the Nagasawa Bunko at Kansai University; on Nagasawa’s collection, see Huang 2013). A full count has yet to be made of how many Baiben Zhang manuscripts are extant. Besides the libraries mentioned above, manuscripts are also held at the Fūryō Bunko at Waseda University, the National Library of China, Peking University, and the Palace Museum in Beijing. There are also items in Tianjin, Hebei, and St. Petersburg.

In this article, I refer to the first page of extant manuscripts bearing the title of the text as the ‘title page’. In many cases, they were probably the front covers, but it is possible that some manuscripts also had covers that originally went over the title page but became lost in the process of being rebound. Typically, the genre of the text is labeled below the title, along with the price of the manuscript.
(Fig. 2); the ornamental frame contains the motifs of plum blossoms, bamboo, pines, and chrysanthemums interspersed among the characters tong sou wu qi 童叟無欺 (‘[we] do not fool the young or the elderly’) in the left column and yan wu er jia 言無二價 (‘no less than the stated price’) in the right. A character at the top of the frame and another at the bottom make up the word shichuan 世傳 (‘passed on for generations’). On manuscripts I have seen, the stamp impressions measure between 3.7 by 5.7 cm and 3.9 by 5.9 cm. Often this stamp is accompanied by another stamp on its right side, stating ‘from the Qianlong era to today; we don’t sell for less, so don’t haggle’ you Qianlong nian qi zhi jin / shaqian bunai bie huanjia 由乾隆年起至今 / 少錢不賣別還價 (Fig. 2).\

Besides the stamp of Baiben Zhang with floral decorations, there is another black stamp bearing Baiben Zhang’s name that appears on the title pages of manuscripts (Fig. 3). Measuring approximately 2.7 by 4.6 cm, it bears a frame of geometric patterns and contains six characters in the middle, in two columns and divided by a line, stating ‘don’t haggle / Baiben Zhang’ bie huanjia / Baiben Zhang 別還價 / 百本張. This stamp may appear alone or in combination with another red stamp giving the address of the shop. Most commonly seen is the address of Tall Well Alley (Gaojing Hutong 高井胡同) on the Main Street inside Xizhi Gate (Xizhimen Dajie 西直門大街) (as in Fig. 4), but on one occasion (Fig. 5) I have come across a stamp stating ‘Baiben Zhang, located at Xinjiekou / Vegetable Garden Alley Number Six’ zhu Xinjiekou Caiyuan Liu- / tiao Hutong Baiben Zhang 住新街口菜園六 / 條胡同百本張. Given that the two addresses are in close proximity to each other in the northwestern section of the Inner City, they were probably not different ‘branch’ sites, but rather indicate that the shop changed its location over time. The latter address was most probably the earlier one.\

Fu Xihua has noted still other stamps on the front of manuscripts.

One stamp has bie huanjia / Baiben Zhang 別還價 / 百本張 enclosed by a simple double-line rectangular frame, which Fu suggests to date to the earliest time in the life of the shop; at times it is accompanied by a red stamp below it, stating ‘look carefully / no returns’ dang mian kan ming / na hui bu huan 當面看明 / 拿回不換. There exists still another red stamp that states, ‘Patrons, please correctly distinguish [the products of] Baiben Zhang: ‘I readily make Huqiu [style] playthings; the theatrical figurines represent the joyous scenes of musical performance’; then [the manuscript] is genuine’ fan cigu zhe renzhun Baiben Zhang ziji cheng zuo Huqiu wan / wu xiren dai su xingyue xirong bian shi zhen buwu 凡赐顧者認準百本張: 自己成做虎丘頑物 戲人, 代塑行樂喜容, 便是真不悞. The curious couplet contained in these lines, while referring to the theatrical figurines sold by Baiben Zhang, may have served another function. Possibly it was a code for clients

\[\text{footnote treatment}\]

\[\text{footnote text}\]
to affirm the authenticity of the products, but just how exactly this functioned remains to be investigated.53

Besides stamps on the title pages, there are also those that appear on the back of manuscripts. There is a long red stamp, with densely packed text in three columns and measuring 1.8 by 8.4 cm (Fig. 6):

本堂書戲岔曲54，當日挑看明白，言明隔兩不退換，／諸公君子莫怪，由乾隆年近三十，少錢不賣。住西直 / 門內高井胡同中間東小胡同東頭路北，張姓行二。

[If you wish to purchase] the stories and songs of this house, carefully select [the books] on the day of purchase; we have the express policy of not accepting returns or exchanges of items past the date, and seek you gentlemen's understanding. From the Qianlong era to the present, we have not sold our products for less than the stated price. [Our shop] is located north of the eastern end of the East Little Alley, midway down Tall Wall Alley inside Xizhi Gate. [My] surname is Zhang; [I am] second in the family line.55

These lines caution customers, again, that once sold, manuscripts are not to be returned or exchanged. The instructions to ‘carefully select [the books] on the day of purchase’ suggest that customers were given the chance to examine products before making purchasing decisions. This calls to mind the temple market displays for which Baiben Zhang was known, where probably selections of products were readily available for purchase.56 The no-return policy may be directed against customers who take manuscripts home simply to read and then return them, and distinguishes Baiben Zhang from lending shops.57

The resemblance between the name of Baiben Zhang and that of a certain ‘Baiben Gang’ 百本剛 (‘Hundred volumes strong’) has led one scholar to suggest that the latter may have been an early incarnation of Baiben Zhang.58 Like Baiben Zhang, Baiben Gang has a variety of stamps. The most striking one is a rectangular black stamp that appears on the title pages of manuscripts,
with the characters Yijuantang / Baiben Gang 億卷堂 / 百本剛 (‘House of million scrolls / Hundred volumes strong’) inside a frame of geometric patterns (Fig. 7). The frame and double column design make the stamp highly reminiscent of a common Baiben Zhang stamp (Fig. 3). Four tiny characters are embedded in the left part of the frame, spelling out jingdu di yi 京都第一 (‘number one in the capital’); another four characters are embedded in the right part, which would most probably have said tian xia chi ming 天下馳名 (‘famed under

Fig. 8: Baiben Gang / Yijuantang stamps inside a rebound set of manuscripts. On the left, a black stamp and red stamp appear on the title page of Mashang lianyin zidi shu shiyi hui shier hui 馬上聯姻子弟書 十一回 十二回 (Love on the battlefield, a youth book, the eleventh and twelfth chapters). On the right, two red stamps appear on the verso of the last folio of the previous volume, presently bound together with this one (in the center: stamp with the characters Baiben Gang ji; on the bottom left: circular stamp). National Library of China, 119984.
The stamp, measuring 2.7 by 5.4 cm, is slightly longer than the Baiben Zhang stamp of similar appearance (2.7 by 4.6 cm).

There are also several red stamps from Baiben Gang. On the title pages of manuscripts, the black stamp is sometimes accompanied by a red stamp containing the characters Yijuantang ji 億卷堂記 ('mark of the House of Million Scrolls') inside a square frame of geometric patterns (Figs 8 and 9).

On the back of manuscripts, two additional kinds of red stamps can be found. One depicts the characters Baiben Gang ji 百本剛記 ('mark of Hundred Volumes Strong') (Fig. 8), and measures 1.9 cm wide and 4.7 cm long; the other is a circular stamp with a geometric frame encircling the same characters, with a diameter of 3.2 cm (see Figs 8 and 10).

Whether ‘Hundred Volumes Zhang’ and ‘Hundred Volumes Strong’ were indeed affiliated calls for further investigation; it is possible that they were competitors.

Stamps from many other shops can be seen on extant books today. Besides Baiben Zhang, the shops Biyetang 別埜堂 (‘The idyllic house’) and Jujuantang 聚卷堂 (‘House of accumulated scrolls’) leave the largest numbers of extant manuscripts. Biyetang employed simple stamps with two four-character lines; one stamp advertises ‘The mark of Biyetang / distinct from the rest’ (Bietang ji / yu zhong bu tong 別埜堂記 / 與衆不同), while another states ‘The seal of Biyetang / distinct from the rest’ (Bietang bao / yu zhong bu tong 別埜堂寶 / 與衆不同).

Similarly, the stamp of Lao Jujuantang 老聚卷堂 (‘The old House of accumulated scrolls’) advertises: ‘Lao Jujuantang / Number one in the business’ (Lao Jujuantang / qishou diyi 老聚卷堂 / 起首第壹).

Possibly related to Lao Jujuantang, the shop Jujuantang 聚卷堂 has a ‘Li of Jujuantang’ (Jujuantang Li 聚卷堂李) stamp, with the characters encased by a frame of geometric patterns (Fig. 11).

An example of the first stamp can be seen on the manuscript KS 4-056, Fu Sinian Library, Caochuan jian kuaishu 草船借箭快書 (Stratagem of the straw boats, a fast tale); the stamp impression measures 2.5 by 4.9 cm. An example of the latter stamp can be found on the title page of a catalog of youth books held at the Chinese National Academy of Arts, reproduced in Huang 2012, 3.

Bao has the common meaning of ‘treasure’, but in this context it most likely refers to ‘seal’.

An example of the first stamp can be found on the manuscript at the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, Sokendo bunko gikyoku 順徳本舎図書館 (Stratagem of the straw boats, a fast tale); the stamp impression measures 1.8 by 4.2 cm; the manuscript has been rebound.

Li is a surname – probably that of the proprietor of the house. The stamp appears on the title page of a Jujuantang sales catalog among the set of manuscripts with shelfmark yi 乙 1008, Capital Library of China, entitled...
Tongletang 同樂堂 (‘House of mutual delight’), Jingyitang 景異堂 (‘House of unusual sights’), Dunhoutang 敦厚堂 (‘House of honesty’), Yanghetang 養和堂 (‘House of nourishing harmony’), and Huijutang 匯劇堂 (‘House of collected plays’). And there was another Baibentang 百本堂 (‘House of hundred volumes’) located in the Outer City, outside of Zhengyang Gate, which apparently sold medicine along with manuscripts of works in genres very similar to those Baiben Zhang sold. While most of these shops leave few traces other than a few stamped manuscripts, they provide inklings into the diversity of the manuscript market. In the next section, we look at the variety of products offered by Baiben Zhang and its model of sales from catalogs.

Products and sales
In his early study of Baiben Zhang, Fu Xihua had observed its special function of both producing and distributing manuscripts for sale, a model that was shared by other shops. Extant sales catalogs provide telling glimpses into their common business model of selling manuscripts from lists of titles. The catalogs, labeled with prices like other manuscript products, were clearly intended to be sold, and must be distinguished from internal inventories of any kind. By my estimate, there are at least twenty extant catalogs from Baiben Zhang, and several catalogs from Leshantang 樂善堂, Bieyetang 別埜堂, and Jujuantang 聚卷堂. Below, I provide a preliminary survey of Baiben Zhang catalogs, with attention to their dates, prices, and repertoires of products.

Dates for extant catalogs corroborate Baiben Zhang’s flourishing in the late nineteenth century. Like other manuscript products, catalogs do not bear dates, but approximate dates can be inferred from a combination of circumstantial evidence, including titles based on historical events and known information about genres of musical and theatrical performances. For a full list of extant catalogs, see Appendix 2.
the Xuantong eras (1909‒1911). The Tongzhi (1862‒1874), Guangxu (1875‒1908), and dated the various catalogs in his personal collection to who had an impressive knowledge of performed repertoires, theatrical performance. Among all the shops we know of, Baiben Zhang seems to have had the greatest variety of products. Its sales catalogs are extant for erhuang xi 二簧 戏 (erhuang opera), gao qiang xi 高腔戲 (gaoqiang opera), dagu shu 大鼓書 (big-drum tales), matou diao 馬頭調 (port tunes), and zidi shu 子弟書 (youth books); probably there were also catalogs of products of other kinds.71 Fu Xihua, who had an impressive knowledge of performed repertoires, dated the various catalogs in his personal collection to the Tongzhi (1862‒1874), Guangxu (1875‒1908), and Xuantong eras (1909‒1911).72 More recently, a scholar has dated Baiben Zhang’s catalogs of youth books between the Xianfeng era (1851‒1861) and 1900.73 Still another study has dated a Baiben Zhang catalog of gaoqiang opera to the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875‒1908).74 Together, these studies locate the shop in the late nineteenth century, while calling for further investigation into its evolution in time.

What information does a sales catalog contain? Generally, it contains a list of titles in a particular genre or type of tune (which we may think of as a ‘product line’), along with corresponding prices. Like other manuscript products, it typically features a title page stamped with the name of the house; next to the stamp, the title and price of the catalog are written (Fig. 12).75 The majority of extant catalogs refer to themselves as mulu 目錄 (‘catalog’) in their titles, and occasionally dan 單 (‘list’) or qingdan 清單 (‘clear list’).76 The main unit of account for prices listed in the catalogs is the diao 吊 (‘string’), with one diao being equivalent to one thousand units of cash.77 Prices under one diao are simply written as numbers in increments of a hundred, i.e., babo 八伯 [百] ‘eight hundred’ for eight hundred cash; amounts over one diao are indicated by a number, with the ‘hundred’ assumed, i.e., yi diao er 一百吊二 (literally, ‘one diao two’) for ‘one diao and two hundred cash’.78

A varied sample of Baiben Zhang catalogs can be found in the collection of the Capital Library of China, including three catalogs of youth books, a catalog of erhuang opera, and a catalog of gaoqiang opera. All adopt a similar layout in which prices are listed below the titles, five to a page.

71 See Appendix 2. Fu 1954a suggests that the shop must also have had a catalog for bangzi 檀子 opera. (In the list above, erhuang xi and gaoqiang xi describe theatrical repertoires (to be discussed in detail below), while dagu shu and zidi shu are related genres of verse narrative. Matou diao is actually not a genre, but rather indicates a type of tune; these ‘port songs’ were popular in the capital already in the early nineteenth century and disappeared some time before the 1930s, and were known to have been sung by courtesans (see Li 1933, 77‒80 and Wang 2008).

72 See Fu 1954a, 319‒328.

73 Chen 2003a, 19‒20; Chen 2003b, 50‒52; Chen 2017, 52‒54.

74 Fan 2010.

75 The figure depicts a catalog of erhuang opera, shelfmark yi 己1008, Capital Library of China. Measuring 14.6 by 10.8 cm, it has been trimmed and rebound together with another catalog.

76 See Appendix 2. Fu 1954a, 326‒328, lists two catalogs of port tunes that contain the terms shanggu dan 上趣單 and shanggu mulu 上唱目錄 in their titles. According to Fu, shanggu means the songbooks were ‘of utmost flavor’ (a literal interpretation of the characters), but the colloquial nature of the term may call for a different interpretation.

77 The diao is a unit of account that is used in many places but is satisfied by different amounts of actual cash (in the form of copper coins) depending on the cash system used. On the diao as a unit of account in Beijing, see King 1965, 60‒62 and 160‒162. While diao literally means ‘string’, in the context of the prices listed in the catalogs, it would refer to a unit of account rather than a physical string of coins.

78 This is the price on the title page shown in Fig. 12.
They contain between 204 and 319 titles and between 2 and 32 folios (Table 1).\textsuperscript{79} Manuscript \textit{yi} 乙 473 is a rare example of a Baiben Zhang book preserved with its original cover and binding; given that it contains no title and is stamped on an otherwise blank first folio, it seems to be an exceptional case (Fig. 13).

Probably it would be useful to begin with the two catalogs of \textit{xi} (‘drama’ or ‘opera’).

Beijing of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a flourishing center for drama, with performances taking place everywhere from the court to commercial theaters and teahouses, and still to temples and merchant guilds that regularly sponsored plays in regional traditions. The variety of dramatic genres in which Baiben Zhang offered products reflects the diversity of sounds present in the capital – from the lasting presence of Kun opera, the genre from Jiangnan favored by elites, to various regional musical traditions of more humble origins that would eventually find their way into the distinct ‘sound of

Table 1: Baiben Zhang catalogs in the collection of the Capital Library of China.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>shelfmark</th>
<th>number of folios</th>
<th>number of titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Gaoqiang xi mulu}</td>
<td>\textit{ding} 丁 6610</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Erhuang xi mulu}</td>
<td>\textit{yi} 己 1008</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Zidi shu}\textsuperscript{81}</td>
<td>\textit{yi} 己 1008</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Zidi shu}\textsuperscript{82}</td>
<td>\textit{yi} 己 473</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Zidi shu}</td>
<td>\textit{yi} 己 459</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{79} The third catalog (catalog of youth books, shelfmark \textit{yi} 己 1008) is incomplete; see note 81.

\textsuperscript{80} This catalog, \textit{yi} 己 473, Capital Library of China, is the earliest of Baiben Zhang’s youth book catalogs. See notes 101, 112, and 120.

\textsuperscript{81} This catalog is incomplete, and has been rebound together with the \textit{erhuang xi mulu} (with the same shelfmark). The title page is missing; the title in brackets above is my description. One folio has been ripped out at the end. An identical Baiben Zhang catalog held at the Chinese National Academy of Arts reveals that it should have 5 more titles, making for a total of 324 titles (Chen 2003b, 50).

\textsuperscript{82} The catalog does not contain a title.

\textsuperscript{83} I use ‘drama’ and ‘opera’ interchangeably to refer to the theatrical traditions of \textit{xi}, which are invariably also musical in performance.

\fig{13a}{Original cover and binding of a catalog of youth books; Capital Library of China, \textit{yi} 己 473.}{0.5}

\fig{13b}{Baiben Zhang stamp appears on the first inside folio; Capital Library of China, \textit{yi} 己 473.}{0.5}
Peking' as described by late nineteenth-century observers from the south. While much ink has been spilled over the histories of these genres, the processes of textual production associated with them remain little studied. Extant manuscripts and printed plays reveal multiple routes by which texts traveled between stage and page, as well as various agents – private, imperial, and commercial – involved in their production and consumption. The role of scribal publishing in this larger picture has yet to be fully explored.

Erhuang opera, originally a regional form, rose to great popularity in the capital in the course of the nineteenth century. The relatively large number of extant catalogs of titles in this genre suggests that it was a major product line for Baiben Zhang. The present catalog (Fig. 12) contains over two hundred titles of erhuang opera, varying between one and eight volumes. Each page contains five columns and three rows, with titles in the top row, numbers of volumes in the middle row, and prices in the bottom row (Fig. 14). Stamp marks reveal signs of use. A circular red stamp appears above more than 80 of the 270 titles; many of these same titles are also marked with an ink dot. These overlapping marks possibly indicate two sides of a business transaction, or a collector stamping the items already acquired.

While the manuscript is labeled as a catalog of erhuang opera, it also contains fifty-one titles from the repertoire of Kunqiang (Kun opera), a form originally from the Kunshan area in Jiangnan that came to be widely celebrated as an art genre in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that retained its associations with elite culture in later times. In Qing Beijing, Kun opera was one of two genres sanctioned by the court, and was performed in commercial theaters as well as the palace well into the late nineteenth century, at the same time

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86 See Wang 2014, 192–193, on the ‘sound of Peking’. On the diverse genres of opera in Beijing and their hierarchy in the eyes of the educated elite, see Goldman 2012, 115–119 and 129–131. Goldman 2001, 77–78, suggests that the texts contained in Baiben Zhang’s manuscripts resembled performed versions, and speculates that audience members may have used the manuscripts as libretti to follow what was being performed (she cites Qi Gong’s recollections of his childhood experiences; see Qi 1983, 313–314). Also cited is an intriguing passage by the playwright Chen Moxiang (陳墨香) (1884–1943) from his Guanju shenghuo sumiao (Sketches from a theatergoer’s life) of c.1934, which portrays the typical figure of a bottom-rate theater enthusiast: ‘He buys a handful of hand-copied play scripts from Baiben Zhang and then, without any attempt to differentiate, he treasures them as though they embodied the rule of law, and then, ass-backwards, he starts criticizing this and pontificating about that…’ (Goldman 2001, 78). Note that this passage postdates the time of Baiben Zhang; the cheap price of the manuscripts during the Republican era (probably through the second-hand book market), as well as clientele such as the figure described above, may have contributed to perceptions of these manuscripts as cheap books, but the status and prices of the manuscripts in their own time are likely to have been much higher (see the discussion to follow).

85 Strictly speaking, erhuang refers to a modal system (or its main mode); erhuang and xipi 西皮 together form the pihuang 皮黄 musical system, the basis of what is presently known as Peking opera. There are differing accounts of the origin of the term erhuang (Wang 1934, 43–49). The performance of erhuang music in the capital has been traced back to 1790, when troupes from Jiangnan brought new regional sounds to the Qianlong emperor’s stages. Zhu Jiajin suggests that, at the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875–1908), troupes still did not refer to themselves as performing erhuang and xipi. According to Zhu, the earliest appearance of the term erhuang in the records of the Court Theatrical Bureau is in the year 1869; records from the following year mention erhuang xi being added to the program (Zhu 1995, 90; 92).

87 Fu 1954a describes two different erhuang xi catalogs in his collection. Several catalogs at the Fu Sinian Library, whose shops are unknown, are also catalogs of erhuang xi.

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In spite of its perceived image of refinement, Kunqiang was performed by commercial troupes in Beijing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in a manner that often incorporated musical styles from other operatic genres (see Goldman 2012, 116–117, 129–131). In the Kunshan area, there is a rural tradition, dating to the late nineteenth century, of Kunqiang being performed by often illiterate professional musicians in the agricultural off-season (Swatek 2002, 139–140).
that erhuang and other regional musical traditions rose to great popularity.\textsuperscript{88} The breakdown of erhuang xi and Kunqiang titles in our catalog – 219 for the former and 51 for the latter – points to a time when erhuang had taken ascendance; that titles in both genres were listed suggests that they were directed to the same parties of musically versed clients. Toward the end of the catalog, under the heading ‘Kun melody’ (Kunqiang 昆腔), the titles are listed with a second tier of prices for texts marked with notation – ‘with music and beats’ (dai gongche banyan 代[帶]工尺板眼) or simply ‘with beats’ (dai banyan 代板眼) (Fig. 15).\textsuperscript{89} These products were clearly intended for singing; possibly they appealed to audiences familiar with the tradition of recital singing known as ‘pure singing’ (qingchang 清唱).\textsuperscript{90}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image15.png}
\caption{Capital Library of China, yi 己1008, fol. 26r and fol. 27r, list of Kunqiang titles. Prices for manuscripts with musical notation are noted in the middle tier.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{88} The ascendance of erhuang and xipi over Kunqiang in the course of the nineteenth century is a favorite topic among historians of Chinese drama, though just when and how this happened remains subject to debate. Zhu Jiajin observes that, as late as 1877, Kunqiang troupes constituted a significant proportion of commercial troupes registered with the Court Theatrical Bureau (four out of eleven); he suggests that in Beijing, Kunqiang did not fully give way to erhuang and xipi until the end of the Guangxu era (1875–1908) (Zhu 1995, 90; 95–96).

\textsuperscript{89} Gongche notation, which employs Chinese characters to denote notes on the scale, was a common form of musical notation in the nineteenth century, and is still used today among village musicians in north China (Jones 1995, 120). Banyan indicates rhythm, with bun being the strong beats and yan being the weak beats.

\textsuperscript{90} Beginning with Ye Tang (葉堂 1736–1795) in the late eighteenth century, elite practitioners defended the recital tradition of ‘pure singing’ in response to the popular, staged Kun opera performed by commercial troupes (Goldman 2012, 129–131). It is not clear to me where Baiben Zhang products lay on this axis (I have not seen any manuscripts containing a Kunqiang text), and whether the two tiers of products, with and without notation, would have appealed to different interests (i.e., reading and singing). In the catalog, the prices given for Kunqiang products marked with notation range from two to more than four times as much as the same work without notation. While erhuang titles listed include complete plays, the titles listed in the Kunqiang section appear to be individual scenes from plays, with no volumes given (even though in both musical traditions there is the practice of performing short scenes from longer works, known as zhezixi 詩子戲). In his study, Fu Xihua had described two erhuang xi catalogues in his collection, which had variations in their erhuang xi listings but contained an identical list of over sixty Kunqiang titles at the end (yi 己 1008 contains fifty-one, but being rebound, it is possible that the folios are not complete). According to Fu, these titles reflected those performed in Beijing theaters at ‘the end of the Qing’, when Kunqiang was in decline (Fu 1954, 320–21). On the other hand, he suggested that the erhuang xi titles contained in one catalog included dramas popular in Beijing venues before the Xianfeng (1851–1861) and Tongzhi (1862–1874) eras. Would this suggest that not all the erhuang xi products were contemporaneous to performances?

Manuscripts intended for singing can also be found among Baiben Zhang’s products of gaoqiang xi 高腔 戏 or gaoqiang opera. Known in the capital since the early Qing, gaoqiang opera and Kun opera were the only genres officially approved by the court through the mid-nineteenth century, when the former saw a revival with princely patronage.\textsuperscript{91} A Baiben Zhang Gaoqiang xi mulu (Fig. 16) has been dated to the early Guangxu era (1875–1908) partly on the basis of theatrical roles contained in it, which do not appear in sources before that time.\textsuperscript{92} The small booklet of 21 folios contains over 200 titles, beginning with auspicious plays and followed by titles listed according to role. Comparison between the titles in the catalog and the known repertoire of a late nineteenth-century troupe reveals many overlaps, corroborating the catalog’s date in the same period.\textsuperscript{93} Would the products have been intended for amateur singers? Extant manuscripts containing specialized notation for singing gaoqiang opera suggest this may have been the case. A printed insert found at the back of a Baiben Zhang

\textsuperscript{91} The musical system of gaoqiang is also known as Yi qiang 易腔 or Yi qiang Yi腔 after Yiyan, Jiangxi, where it is believed to have originated in the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644) before spreading through the empire to mix with local musical traditions and develop different forms. On gaoqiang and the court’s attempts to regulate performed genres in the capital, see Goldman 2012, 115–116. On its revival in the mid to late nineteenth century, see Wang 1934, 75–76.

\textsuperscript{92} Fan 2010, 122–125.

\textsuperscript{93} Fan 2010, 125–128.
manuscript, which most likely would have been included in many other manuscripts, gives detailed instructions on how to vocalize the notations—consisting of dashes, circles, and combinations of them. A handwritten version of this text, inside a reference booklet on the pronunciation of characters in singing, includes an additional line at the beginning: This book of gaoqiang opera is entirely the authentic text of the Hecheng troupe, with no inconsistencies...

The catalogs from Baiben Zhang which have received the most scholarly attention to date are those of youthbooks (zidi shu), the northern genre of verse narrative widely popular among the bannermen populations of Beijing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was a genre that thrived as both a literature and a form of performing art, propagated through private gatherings of amateur singers as well as through performances in teahouses and other commercial venues. Its popularity is attested by thousands of extant manuscripts, ranging from personal copies made by amateurs and aficionados to commercial copies from scribal publishers. The large quantity of manuscripts of the latter kind draws attention to the important role played by shops such as Baiben Zhang in the evolution of the literature, while handwritten sales catalogs from various shops, including Leshantang and Biyetang, reveal the impressive variety of titles in scribal circulation. Judging by the numbers of extant books, Baiben Zhang was by far the leading producer of youth books in the Qing, whether manuscript or print; zidi shu must have been one of its most important product lines.

While Fu Xihua made the earliest attempt to date the catalogs, later scholars have made further progress by studying the titles contained in them. The stories that touch on datable events of the nineteenth century have made rough chronological orderings possible. The scholar Chen Jinzhao has divided extant

94 This single folio appears at the end of a Baiben Zhang manuscript of Kaoitang 戲 豍 (Sokodo bunko gikyoku 雙紅堂 戏曲 65; photo-reprinted in Huang and Oki 2013, vol. 7, 20‒37). The instructions reveal that many of the notations have to do with ‘singing’ (chang 詞) or ‘accompanying’ (bang 唱) (gaoqiang is known for having chorus sections). The notations are not unique to Baiben Zhang manuscripts, but can also be found in products from other houses such as Yanghetang (Huang and Oki 2013, vol. 7, 38‒324).

95 I have not been able to track down the Hecheng troupe. The manuscript belongs to a set of rebound booklets, with shelfmark Sokodo bunko gikyoku 雙紅堂 戏曲 333, at the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo (reproduced in Huang and Oki. 2013, vol. 15). It is undated; labeled as a Jiantuan zi ben 尖團字本 (Book of characters with pointed and rounded sounds), it is a reference booklet containing lists of characters and their pronunciations for singing.

96 For an overview of scholarship on this genre, see Chiu 2018, 16‒19.

97 See note 25.

98 Zidi shu was also printed by woodblock print publishers and, toward the end of the Qing, by lithographic publishers, but manuscripts dominate the extant corpus by far. For a survey of extant zidi shu by the numbers and more detailed discussion on the role of commercial scribal publishing, see Lu, 2018.

99 The Leshantang catalog will be discussed below. Fu 1954b, 14–15, dated the Biyetang catalog to the Xuantong era (1909‒1911), while Chen 2003b, 52, suggests it dates before 1900.

100 See Lu 2018, 106‒108.

101 Fu 1954a and 1954b.
Baihen Zhang catalogs into three types, with the earliest dated to the Xianfeng era (1851–1861); catalogs of a second type date between that time and 1886; and the latest and the most commonly seen variety dates between 1886 and 1900 (Fig. 17).102 Given that many works take historical events as their subject, including those that took place in Beijing, it is possible that scribal publishers capitalized on current events of public interest to market new texts.

Interestingly, the vast majority of titles on historical events are extant only in handwritten form; as manuscripts of commercial origin are generally not dated, however, we do not know the actual amount of time it took between the events’ occurrence and their appearance in the literature.103

The earliest extant catalog of youth books, from the shop Leshantang of Beijing, provides clues about how sales catalogs functioned. This catalog has been dated to the Daoguang era (1821–1850).104 In an ad at the beginning of the manuscript, Leshantang extols the superiority of its texts in a market abundant with those of others:

This house copies and sells youth books and new Shi-style tales with sections of rhyming verses. Having been edited by well-known persons, [the stories] are true to sentiment and moral principle, and their messages are subtle and exquisite; they are not works of the ordinary variety. Other houses purportedly offer these tales, but they only tout the name for profit’s sake, while the lines in their books and the plots likewise differ from the [true] tales of Shi [Yukun]. Only after several years of painstaking research has this house been able to obtain several manuscripts; fortunately, they concur with Shi’s tales.105 Discerning patrons know that our claim is true to the word. Patrons, carefully discern the mark of Leshantang. Now we have compiled a catalog of youth books and Shi-style tales, and have clearly listed [the available titles] for your selection and use. We promise that the products are genuine and true to the price. In addition, we copy the scripts and lyrics of the famous troupes, for which separate catalog(s) exist. Everything is available upon demand; we do not fool our customers.

See Chen 2003a, Chen 2003b, and Chen 2017, 52–54. The three catalogs of youth books at the Capital Library of China represent each of these types. Yi 473 is an example of the earliest type; the catalog contained in yi 1008 is an example of the second type; yi 459 belongs to the latest type. In conversation, Chen has described a fourth and latest type, examples of which include a catalog held at the National Library of China (5 October 2018, Taipei). I have not seen this item.

Historical events touched on by texts held in manuscripts from Baihen Zhang include: the banning of theater in the Inner City in 1799, the uprisings led by Jahangir Khoja in Xinjiang in the 1820s, the prostitution scandal at a Beijing temple of 1838 involving bannermen and nobility, military corruption in 1841–1842, and the uprising of Hong Xiuquan (from 1851). There are manuscripts from Bieyetang that contain a text on French incursions in Vietnam in 1883‒1884 (Yuefa jiaobing 越法交兵, Vietnam fights France). For extant works based on Qing dynasty stories, see Huang et al. 2012a, 341–434.

On the date of this catalog, see Chen 2003b, 50–51. Chen suggests that it dates to some time between 1836 and 1838, given known biographical information about Helushi 鶴侶氏, author of a work contained in it (Shiwei tan 侍衛嘆, Lament of the imperial guardsman), and the fact that the catalog does not contain the work Lingguan miao 灵官庙 (The Lingguan temple), which is based on scandals at a Beijing temple in 1838.

The exact nature of these hard-won manuscripts is not clear to me. The Chinese text simply has the term di 底, which literally means ‘bottom’ or ‘base’; it can refer to a handwritten draft on which a printed text is based (diben 拓本) or to a version of a text from which copies are made (di 蓝本). Possibly these were manuscripts transcribed or derived from performances. I interpret Shi shu 石書 (‘Shi’s tales’) to refer to actual performances by the storyteller, given that the catalog probably came from his time. Note that the text employs a different term, Shi yun shu 石韻書 (‘Shi-style tales’) to refer to the books containing these tales.
The manuscripts of this house are famed everywhere. On every seventh and eighth day, we are at the Western Corner Gate at Huguo Temple. On ordinary days, look for [Mr.] Wang’s Leshantang, the first shop on the north end of West End Lane, inside the eastern entrance of the Fourth Alley in Gongmenkou, inside Fucheng Gate. When there is inclement weather on temple fair days, we sell from home.

A word ought to be said here about the ‘Shi-style tales’, of which 22 titles are included at the end of Leshantang’s catalog. The Shi-style tale, referred to in catalogs as Shi yun shu 石韻書 or Shi pai shu 石派書, is a genre of prosimetric storytelling related to the youth book, that is known to have flourished during the Daoguang and Xianfeng eras and ceased at the beginning of the Republican period.

The popularity of these stories in performance appears to have stimulated demand for the texts, which, as Leshantang’s ad reveals, were sought after by scribal publishers who competed to obtain authentic versions. Catalogs of youth books from the various houses typically end with a list these longer works (Fig. 18). A single sheet of unknown date, stamped by Baiben Zhang, announces a list of available and forthcoming titles that it has taken great effort to obtain:

風波亭一部現有
九頭案以後,從南俠暗行、婆子哭墓起,
合計六十餘本，要者定抄。

再，本堂
有數樣石韻之書未能得全，現在託人挽轉。
全行得妥，較正明白，再行定抄可也。

The title The Pavilion of Trouble is readily available.
As for the plot after The Case of the Nine Heads, from Secret Ventures of the Southern Knight to The Old Woman Weeps at the Grave, there are a total of over sixty volumes. They can be copied to order upon demand. Moreover, there are a number of Shi-style tales that this house has not been able to obtain in their entirety; at present we have employed someone to look for the missing parts, and the texts can be copied to order once they are complete and corrected.

The titles referred to in the passage belonged to the cycle of stories about Judge Bao that were widely popular in the capital in the nineteenth century, judging by the many versions of extant texts. The ad not only provides important clues into the textual evolution of these stories, but also reveals that dingchao 定抄, or ‘copying to order’, was the standard way in which manuscripts were produced and sold. In the Leshantang catalog, the final title listed is Longtu gong’an 長途公案.

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107 This would mean the seventh, eighth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth days of the month.

108 See Appendix 3 for the complete advertisement. Li 1934, 19, mentioned an ad by Baiben Zhang seeking texts of Shi-style tales. Possibly he is referring to this same item, although this seems to be an announcement rather than a call for texts.

110 See Bauer 1974, Blader 1977, Hanan 1980, Ma 1973, Ma 1975, and Ma 1979, 214‒218; also, see Ge 2010 and Idema 2009 for ballads on Judge Bao from an earlier period.
龍圖公案 (Cases from the Academician of The Dragon Hall), an extended collection of Judge Bao court-case stories; under the title it says: ‘copied and sold by section; a separate catalog exists; copied to order’ 按段抄賣，另有目錄，要者定寫.112 We might also recall the anecdote from Wandering through the Huguo Temple in which the protagonist ordered copies of The Cases of Judge Shi and The Green Peony. For these longer works related to storytelling performance, then, ‘copying to order’ was a common procedure; it remains to be investigated whether it also applied to shorter works and to other genres besides the Shi-style tale.113

While pre-ordering appears to have dictated one sector of sales, there is evidence to suggest that shops like Baiben Zhang kept regular stocks of manuscripts. Apart from the sales catalogs discussed above, two items in the collection of the Fu Sinian Library at Academia Sinica appear to have been internal inventories. The first is a booklet of nine folios from an unknown shop, written in one hand, with running lists of titles.114 Small triangles drawn beneath each title, indicating tallies, reveal that the first seven folios were part of an inventory.115 The titles are grouped under headings containing the names of genres, including Chuan xi 川戏 (Sichuan opera), ganban 赶板 (swift beats), lianhua lao 莲花落 (the lotus falls), zidi shu 子弟书 (youth books), kuaishu 快书 (fast tales), Kun Yi xi 昆弋戏 (Kun and Yi opera), paizi 牌子 (linked tunes), dagu 大鼓 [big drum], and matou [diao] 馬頭 (port tunes); the titles number well over 500 in total.116 While we do not know which shop the inventory comes from, its impressive variety of stocked titles supports the thesis that shops like Baiben Zhang produced books in multiple genres at the same time. In another inventory containing a list of 52 titles on a single folio,117 notes written under several titles reveal where manuscripts were kept: under

![Fig. 19: Two titles marked for 'copy-to-order' (dingchao 定抄) at the top. Capital Library of China,yi 已 473, fols 16’ and 17.](image)

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112 Fu Sinian Library, Tj 27-212, fol. 15. The punctuation is mine. It seems that the scribe who copied this manuscript wrote jia 段 in lieu of a very similar character, duan 段 (‘section’). It is possible that the character jia 段 was written as a homophone for jia 价 (‘price’), in which case an jia chao mai 按段抄賣 would mean ‘copied and sold according to price’. But jia 价 (rather than jia 段) does appear elsewhere in the same manuscript (fol. 2; in the line huo zheng jia 价格 ‘the products are genuine and true to price’).

113 In manuscript yi 已 473, Capital Library of China, the term dingchao is written above several titles of youth books, which suggests that they were available on a copy-to-order basis (Fig. 19). The titles are: Kao hong 拷紅 (2 hui [chapters], 1 diao), Xuejiao guanhua 薛蛟觀畫 (2 hui, 800 cash), and Feixiong meng 梅熊夢 (5 hui, 1 diao 800 cash). Compared with other titles in the catalog, these titles were not particularly long or expensive, and it is not clear to me presently why they were singled out. But they do suggest that at least some zidi shu titles were copied to order.

114 Fu Sinian Library, Tj 31-240. The folios have undergone preservation (backing has been applied) and the binding is from a later time; the folios may have originally belonged to a larger set of papers. The digitized version at the Fu Sinian Library is incomplete and does not accurately reflect the correct orders of folio rectos and versos.

115 On the last two folios, instead of tallies below each title, single triangles are drawn above selected titles, which suggests that these folios were part of something else – a secondary inventory. They are written in the same hand as the first seven folios and adopt a similar layout of listing abbreviated titles in multiple rows on a page.

116 The count is made from lists contained in the first seven folios; besides the categories named, there are three more kinds of xi 戏, or dramas (I am not able to make out the writing before the character xi in each case), and a certain kind of tune (diao 鼓); in the headings, the name of the genre is sometimes followed by the term di 底 (‘base’), e.g., ganban di 赶板底 (“base copies” of ganban [titles]). The last two folios contain titles in the genres of erhuang 二簧, Kun Yi 昆弋, kuai shu 快书, zidi shu 子弟书, dagu 大鼓, matou [diao] 马頭, paizi 牌子, and quandiao 全调. The fact that kuai shu and zidi shu are listed separately suggests that the nine folios may date to sometime during the Guangxu era (1875–1908), when kuai shu evolved apart from zidi shu into an independent genre (Chen 2017, 53; 2003b, 70).

117 Fu Sinian Library, Tj 28-225, fols 1’–1’. This single folio has been bound together with another thirteen folios from one or more sales catalogs, but clearly does not belong together with them. Which shop it comes from is unknown, and I have not yet identified the genre(s) to which the titles belong.
one title, it says ‘there are [copies] at the temple’ (miaoshang you 庙上有); under another, ‘base copies of this are kept at the Wei Room’ (shi dizi zai Wei wu 是底子在未屋); under still another title, ‘there are no base copies of this’ (shi dizi wuyou 是底子无有). The ‘base copies’ possibly referred to manuscripts that were kept in-house – perhaps drafts from which copies for sale could be made.\footnote{This is to interpret the term dizi 底子 in the sense of diben 底本, ‘base manuscript’ (refer to note 106).} We might recall the prefatory remarks in the Leshantang catalog that say its products were ‘completely available upon request’ (yi ying ju quan). This would have implied that it possessed the texts for all the titles, ready to be copied to order, and possibly that it stocked ready-to-sell copies; the unknown house to which the above inventory belonged apparently had multiple sites of storage for its manuscripts, including at the temple.\footnote{The unnamed site of storage for the titles other than the ones described may well be the home shop. Interestingly, the Shi-style tale does not appear among the many categories listed in Tj 31-240. The folios may have been incomplete, but it can also be due to the fact that these longer works were copied to order instead of being stocked for sale.}

We might imagine that shops such as Baiben Zhang had multiple sectors of sales at the height of their careers – from pre-copied manuscripts at temple fairs to products copied to order (such as the longer works of Shi-style tales). We unfortunately have no extant sales records, but the prices and lengths of titles listed in catalogs offer some clues into production patterns. A survey of two sample Baiben Zhang catalogs may provide some food for thought. Of the 219 erhuang titles contained in the catalog of erhuang opera examined earlier in this article, the majority are between one and two volumes (ben 本); a total of sixteen titles are five volumes or longer (Chart 1).\footnote{The prices range between 280 cash for the cheapest one-volume title to 4,800 cash for a complete play in eight volumes, while the variation in prices among titles with the same number of volumes suggests that the price was not determined by length alone (Table 2). Of note is that the price of the catalog itself, written on its title page at 1,200 cash, is much higher than the one-volume products listed inside it, which range between 280 and 500 cash. If we look at a second catalog, a catalog of youth }

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volumes (ben) in title</th>
<th>Lowest price</th>
<th>Highest price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Prices ranges in copper cash for erhuang xi titles.

\[220\]\footnote{The data contained in Chart 1 and Table 2 below is gathered from Erhuang xi mulu, yi 乙 1008, Capital Library of China. I have not included the Kunqiang titles contained in it in this discussion, as their lengths are not given in the catalog.}
Chart 2: Zidi shu titles by number of volumes.

Table 3: Prices ranges in copper cash for zidi shu titles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters (hui) in title</th>
<th>lowest price</th>
<th>highest price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>4,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
books, the patterns are similar. Among a total of 251 titles of youth books, those containing one or two chapters (hui zheng) constitute the majority of the products, even though the longest titles go up to thirty chapters (Chart 2). As in the catalog of erhuang opera, there is a good deal of variation in prices for titles of the same length (Table 3). What proportion of the shop’s actual income came from shorter works and what proportion from longer ones? Does the range of products and prices allude to different sales sectors and different kinds of clientele – from individuals browsing books at temple fairs to wealthy households and institutions which could afford to keep libraries and private troupes of performers?

Probably it would be most telling to understand the prices listed in the catalogs compared with external prices of the same period. What first has to be said is that, despite the apparent wealth of price information contained in sales catalogs, they are more difficult to interpret than would appear, given the monetary fluctuations in Beijing in the second half of the nineteenth century and the absence of precise dates for the manuscripts. We might nevertheless attempt a tentative comparison between manuscripts in relation to other reading materials and the cost of going to the theater at the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875–1908). A Baiben Zhang catalog of gaoqiang opera which has been dated to the beginning of this period lists prices for manuscripts ranging from 400 cash to sixteen diao (the equivalent of 16,000 cash). From the same time, the price of a ticket at the theater varied between 600 cash for the cheapest seats in the ‘pond’ to 18,000 for the most expensive private balcony seats. The lowest-priced manuscripts, then, were slightly more affordable than the cheapest tickets to the theater.

For low-income residents of the city, both would have been luxuries. In his study of the wages of unskilled laborers, Sydney Gamble cites rates for daily wages fixed by Beijing’s carpenters’ and masons’ guilds for unskilled workers, giving the figure of 140 cash for the years 1862–1877 and 160 cash for 1877–1887, with the amounts including both money wage and food money. Taking these figures into account, a manuscript priced at 400 cash would have been the equivalent of several days’ wages. Longer works in multiple volumes would hardly have been affordable for low-income city workers; probably they were expensive for many of the capital’s bannermen as well, especially those who ranked low in the official hierarchy and had moderate incomes.

Compared with other reading materials, the lowest-priced manuscript products from the gaoqiang opera catalog were far from the lowest on the rung. This is clear when we compare their prices with those of hand-copied literature rented out at lending shops. For the price of purchasing one Baiben Zhang manuscript at 400 cash, one could rent 44 volumes of entertainment literature, with a 9-cash rental fee per volume in 1875. To own a Baiben Zhang manuscript, then, was something quite different from having access to leisure reading materials, especially considering that some of the titles it sold may have been available through status. ‘Pond’ seats, those on the ground level directly opposite the stage, were the cheapest tier and were seen as occupied by the most vulgar fans; the wealthiest patrons occupied seats in the upper balconies to the side of the stage, separated by screens, also known as ‘officials’ seats’. See Goldman 2012, 77–84.

A capital bannerman’s income consisted of a combination of silver and grain from the Qing state, and sometimes also income from land (Elliott 2001b, 194–95). But there was a great deal of social and economic disparity among the bannermen population of Beijing: many lower-class bannermen, especially those who did not have positions in the government, struggled financially in the late Qing (see Zheng 2018, 78–126). Elena Chiu suggests that the longest youth books from Baiben Zhang would have been out of the reach of most lower-class bannermen, given their incomes (Chiu 2018, 285).

*The data contained in Chart 2 and Table 3 below is gathered from yi fu gaoqiang, Capital Library of China. In the discussion, I have not included the eleven titles of Shi-style tales listed at the end of the same catalog. While the unit employed for zidi shu titles is ‘chapter’ (hui), for the Shi-style tales, length is given in volumes (ben). Lengths are given for only some of the latter titles; they vary between six and forty volumes."

121 On Beijing’s cash system in the late nineteenth century, see King 1965, 58–65, 158–163, and 215–218. On changes in prices, wages, and costs of living, see Peng 2013. The serious inflations during the Xianfeng period (1856–1864) constitute the majority of the products, even though the

122 For a capital bannerman’s income consisted of a combination of silver and grain from the Qing state, and sometimes also income from land (Elliott 2001b, 194–95). But there was a great deal of social and economic disparity among the bannermen population of Beijing: many lower-class bannermen, especially those who did not have positions in the government, struggled financially in the late Qing (see Zheng 2018, 78–126). Elena Chiu suggests that the longest youth books from Baiben Zhang would have been out of the reach of most lower-class bannermen, given their incomes (Chiu 2018, 285).

123 The manuscript is ding fu gaoqiang, Capital Library of China. On its dating, see Fan 2010. In the following comparison of prices, the understanding is that they all refer to the same units of account local to Beijing.

124 "These figures are given by Shen Nanyu (沈南野) in his Xuanman lingmeng fu (Record of scattered dreams of Xuanman), cited in Wang 1934, 81. Shen writes retrospectively from the early 1920s, relating that he was eleven years old in 1875. The commercial theaters of the Qing were sites of mixed social composition, with the various types of seats differentiated by price and associated with theatergoers of varying social status. ‘Pond’ seats, those on the ground level directly opposite the stage, were the cheapest tier and were seen as occupied by the most vulgar fans; the wealthiest patrons occupied seats in the upper balconies to the side of the stage, separated by screens, also known as ‘officials’ seats’. See Goldman 2012, 77–84.


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127 Li 1936, 162, notes this price from the cover of a manuscript of Tian ci fu (天賜福) (Heaven bestows blessings) from the lending shop Sameizhai三美齋, dated to 1875. According to stamps from various lending shops that detailed their policies, readers commonly paid an initial deposit to the shop and were then able to rent out books, exchanging one volume for the next on a daily basis. The manuscript from Sameizhai was apparently lent out for exchange every two days. There were also penalties for losing a book; the price for a hand-copied volume of the Sanguwachi guci 三國志故事 (Drum ballad on the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms) from the lending shop Juwenzhai聚文齋, of unknown date, was one diao (ibid.). Li mistakes 1 diao for 100 cash (instead of 1,000 cash) and others have inherited this error.
rental.\textsuperscript{128} The expensive pricing of Baiben Zhang products is confirmed when we look at how affordably priced printed materials could be in the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{129} In the capital, an issue of a printed gazette – a common vehicle for the official news – cost as little as 7 cash in 1878; the total cost of a year’s worth of gazettes, 3,746 cash, would have been sufficient for purchasing merely a handful of Baiben Zhang’s medium-priced titles.\textsuperscript{130} From these comparisons we might rather get a sense of the manuscripts as collectibles; this is echoed by the visual appearance of the pages, which, compared with cheaper sorts of printed and handwritten materials with writing squeezed densely onto the page, stand out for their spacious margins, large characters, and general aesthetic appeal (Fig. 20).\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{128} While the lending shops were known to have rented out longer works of drum ballads and court-case fiction, some also rented out books of songs (Zhang 1996b, 450–451). Two items in the Sokodo Bunko (Sokodo bunko giryoku) 雙紅堂 戏曲 265 and 266, photo-reprinted in Huang and Oki 2013, vol. 32, 368 and 523), bearing stamps of a Yongfa caiyuan 永發菜園 (The ever-flourishing vegetable garden), contain collections of port tunes (matou diao) and eight-cornered drum songs (bajiao gu), respectively; a note on the last folio recto of one of them, cautioning patrons not to rip or write over the text, suggests that the book was intended for rental (Huang and Oki 2013, vol. 32, 520). Zhang 1996b, 451, suggests that youth books were also available at lending shops, which he divided into two kinds in accordance with the different types of manuscripts they offered, but this has to be corroborated by further evidence.

\textsuperscript{129} A survey of catalogs from commercial and government print publishers reveals just how cheap printed books could be in the late Qing (Zhou 2005, contains a list of such catalogs; also see Li 2010).

\textsuperscript{130} See Mokros 2016, 93–152, on gazettes in the capital. The prices above come from Osaka 2004 (cited in Mokros 2016, 142), who described them as contained in a note filed with a set of gazettes from Juheng Baofang 聚恆 戏曲 kept at the Östasiatiska museet in Stockholm. The figure of 3,746 cash includes the price for the gazettes (7 cash each, with 338 issues printed in 1878, making a total of 2,366 cash) and the price for twelve book covers (at 115 cash each, making 1,380 cash in total). Juheng Baofang was one of the main publishers of printed gazettes in the late Qing; issues viewable through the digital collection of the National Library of Australia range between several to about a dozen folios in length (see Jing bao 1898). I am grateful to Emily Mokros for information on Juheng Baofang. The affordability of printed gazettes is corroborated by other sources from the period. There were varying tiers of quality among gazettes; manuscript gazettes continued to circulate alongside printed ones in the late nineteenth century, while often sold at much higher prices (Mokros 2016, 133–145).

\textsuperscript{131} While it has been suggested that Baiben Zhang manuscripts were ‘cheap’ compared with certain novels (Cui 2005, 153; Chiu 2018, 285), these novels may well have been the exception.

The existence of catalogs points to the likelihood that a significant part of sales consisted of orders beyond single items. This is suggested by the many signs of use in extant catalogs, from stamp marks to numbers and dots marking titles and prices.\textsuperscript{132} The shop apparently encouraged purchases in bulk: at the end of one catalog of youth books, a note lists discounts for purchases exceeding ten diao, a hundred diao, and a thousand diao.\textsuperscript{133} These prices would not have been affordable for city residents of ordinary means. If we take into consideration who would have been able to afford the very large orders, we might recall that scores of Baiben Zhang manuscripts were present among the former collection of the Court Theatrical Bureau.\textsuperscript{134} The shop’s location in the western section of the Inner City, in a neighborhood close to
prominent bannermen households, suggests that well-to-do Inner City residents may also have been among its clients.\(^{135}\)

More in-depth study is due on the sales catalogs from Baiben Zhang and other scribal publishers. Further study should yield more insights into the precise dates of the shops and their evolving lines of products, as well as their possible connections to the world of commercial theater in nineteenth-century Beijing. On a practical level, the catalogs call attention to the manner of production that made possible books in great variety. In the next section, this article examines scribal hands in manuscript products for glimpses into the processes of organized scribal production.

**Scribal Production**

While anecdotal sources might lead us to imagine a Mr. Zhang assiduously sitting at his desk and copying day and night, both the quantity and variety of extant manuscripts suggest that Baiben Zhang was (or became) a much larger operation involving organized scribal production. The number of scribes employed over the course of the house’s lifetime of operation has yet to be ascertained – this may have to wait for an efficient method of sorting handwriting samples in the hundreds – but a glimpse of scribal production can be had from a look at even a small group of manuscripts. In the discussion below, we examine a selection of youth books from Baiben Zhang in the collection of the Capital Library of China. Given the quantity of extant manuscripts in this genre from the shop, they would seem to be a reasonable place to begin studying its productions.

Baiben Zhang’s youth book manuscripts adopt a long, rectangular format (Fig. 21) and a regular layout to the text, with four columns on each page, each divided into two sections (Fig. 22). Each section of a column, corresponding to a sung line, contains space for seven characters, while longer lines are written partially in double columns using smaller characters. The handwriting is neat and formal, with the individual characters clearly legible and in a regular size, being the work of seasoned scribes who were practiced in writing neatly and consistently if not always elegantly.\(^{136}\)

The regularity of the hands in the manuscripts is such that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish one hand from another. In identifying hands, it is thus useful to find markers besides handwriting that display individual idiosyncrasies.

A common feature of manuscripts are L-shaped symbols that appear at the ends of lines, marking regular divisions of text within each chapter (hui [圈]).\(^{137}\) While the functions of these symbols have yet to be well understood, here they provide an efficient means for distinguishing scribal hands. In spite of variations for each copyist at different times and with the change of the writing brush, there are points on the ‘L’ where pressure is applied consistently by the individual scribe, in many cases quite distinctly (Fig. 23). The amount of space between the marks and the characters, as well as their size in relation to each other, can also assist in this investigation. Where comparison of the L-shaped symbols yields questions, comparison of characters – focusing on the ways that the same strokes are written – can be further employed to distinguish one scribal hand from another.

The manuscripts examined here belong to a set of Baiben Zhang manuscripts rebound into six volumes.\(^{138}\) The inside case covers of the two cases that enclose them are signed by the collector Nahata 納哈塔 and dated Guangxu 26 [1900]; his inscription inside the second case, which holds volumes five and six, states that the books were rebound at that time.\(^{139}\) The bottom and top edges of the folios have been trimmed, variation, expressive grace). Boltz 2012/2013, citing inspirations from Bernhard Bischoff on Latin paleography, proposes a spectrum of formality for thinking about handwriting styles in early Chinese manuscripts; the presence of a neat, formal ‘book hand’ implies a high status for the object regardless of its textual content. Along this line of reasoning, the formal handwriting style in Baiben Zhang manuscripts would corroborate their status as collectibles.

\(^{135}\) See Liang 2018, 18‒19, on princely mansions in the western section of the Inner City.

\(^{136}\) Varying degrees of calligraphic grace can be found among scribal hands in Baiben Zhang manuscripts. Regardless of calligraphic merit, they were copied by practiced hands, and one might try to appreciate the writing in terms other than ‘superior’ or ‘inferior’ calligraphy. One might argue that the scribes valued different qualities (e.g., formal consistency of the characters, efficiency of writing) than those who practiced calligraphy as an art (e.g.,

\(^{137}\) These L-shaped symbols can be found not only in manuscripts from Baiben Zhang, but also in those from other houses. It has been suggested that they marked divisions of episodes (lao 落) within each chapter, facilitating both the reading and performance of youth books; it is also possible that they indicated repetition (Cui 2005, 21–22). Similar L-shaped symbols can be found in manuscripts of other kinds of performance-related literature, such as ritual handbooks.

\(^{138}\) They have the common shelfmark of yi 已 448, Capital Library of China.

\(^{139}\) In his inscriptions, Nahata also listed the contents of the volumes contained in each case. Generally, they correspond to how the volumes presently appear, with the exception of volume five, which contains a text in twenty-four chapters not listed by Nahata (it is a copy of the youth book Yuanyang kou 竟漁扣 [The bond of matrimony]). Possibly the collector did not include it in his list because he was not able to identify it; there is no title page which precedes the folios of text in their current form. It is also possible that the volume was rebound again after Nahata’s time. Besides Nahata’s seals, manuscripts also bear the seals of Wu Xiaoling, to whom they belonged before being transferred to the Capital Library. There are also the seals of a certain Yinqu shangguan 岳秋山館 (Fig. 21).
so their original dimensions would have exceeded the current measurements (11.2 by 20.5 cm). The six volumes each contain what were originally multiple manuscripts. In the first four volumes, 26 titles are represented, including many short texts ranging from five to eight folios long. The fifth and sixth volumes each contain two titles of significant

besides these short texts, there are longer titles which are only partially represented – e.g. the title page indicates that the manuscript is part of a sequence by labelling the title with touhui 头回 ("first chapter") or yuan 元 ("prime") 元. It is not always clear to me whether each chapter originally formed one codicological unit. In a few cases, multiple chapters have been bound together into the volume, but only the title page for the first chapter is present. In the case of Changban po zidi shu 長坂坡子弟書 (The battle at Changban Hill, a youth book), two title pages are present, one labelled as touhui (the first chapter) and one as erhui 二回 (the second chapter), so each chapter was originally one manuscript. But this does not seem to apply universally, as there are also instances where the chapters of a text run continuously and do not match page divisions (so multiple chapters would have been bound together).

length. The analyses below will examine the scribal hands in a selection of the manuscripts for clues into the processes of production.

In the manuscripts contained in the first four volumes, at least fourteen hands can be distinguished, based on the L-shaped symbols that appear in them (Fig. 24). Interestingly, when one compares the handwritten titles on each of the title pages (one might pay special attention to the final three characters zidi shu 子弟書 which appear in all of them), recurring idiosyncracies in the execution of certain
Fig. 23: Two hands with variations, from manuscripts contained in Capital Library of China, yi 448, vols 6 and 2, respectively. Top row, left to right: Qiao-dongfeng zidi shu (The fair east wind, a youth book), 11 hui, fol. 3’, fol. 4’; 12 hui, fol. 1’, fol. 2’. Bottom row, left to right: Chuzi tan zidi shu, fol. 1’, fol. 2’; Changsui tan zidi shu 長隨嘆子弟書 (The servant’s lament, a youth book), fol. 1’, fol. 2’.

strokes suggests that they were all written in one hand (Fig. 25). If it is indeed true that one person signed all the titles, the manuscripts would belong to a common span of time. This also provides clues about the division of labor: there were multiple copyists and a single title-signer; the latter was possibly the possessor of the house stamps, the organizer of labor division, and the proprietor of the shop. A survey of a larger sample of manuscripts should reveal whether there were changes in the title-signer; whether the fourteen hands seen here were recurring hands; and with more detailed surveys of handwriting (not only the L-shaped symbols, but also the characters), we may have clues about the growths and declines in the size of the scribal staff over the course of Baiben Zhang’s lifetime.

We can glimpse the collaborative process of copying a multi-chapter text through the case of Qiao dongfeng zidi shu (The fair east wind, a youth book), a youth book in twelve chapters. In their present, rebound form, the entire 12 hui are bound together and form the first part of a larger volume; the chapters number 7 folios each, with each hui starting on a new folio. What is very interesting is that four scribal hands were involved in copying this 12-hui text (Fig. 26). The first seven hui are by a single scribe, then hui 8 is in a distinctly different hand. Hui 9 and 10 are copied by yet a third copyist. Hui 11 is again in the hand of the first scribe, but only the first folio and fol. 2 recto; fol. 2 verso is left blank, and then, beginning with fol. 3’, the remainder of hui 11 is in a different, fourth hand. This last copyist also completed hui 12. This raises the question whether the copyists in fact sat in the same room and took turns copying, which seems plausible given the return of the first scribe and then what seemed to be an abrupt departure in the middle of hui 11. Did he go on lunch break between hui 8 and hui 11 – when 21 folios, or 336 lines, were copied in his absence by his colleagues? And then, when he set about copying again, did some urgent task call him away, such that he had to leave the better part of the remaining two hui to yet another colleague?

The presence of multiple hands in other multi-chapter manuscripts from Baiben Zhang suggests that this case was not an exception. Rather, the phenomenon points to the efficiency and flexibility of organized scribal production, with scribes able to easily resume each other’s work, while texts were copied in accordance with a standard layout. This would have most easily taken place at a workshop or other site of organized copying. Many questions are open: given the hundreds of titles advertised by Baiben Zhang in its catalogs, did copyists specialize in certain genres of texts or certain titles? For manuscripts sold with musical notations, was there a division of labor between copyists and notators – with the task of annotation requiring familiarity with musical performance? How was work allocated in other ways? And just how big was the Baiben Zhang operation at a given point in time – how many people were involved in the various roles of editing, copying, annotating, cover-signing, stamping, binding, inventory-keeping, temple-fair staffing, account-keeping, and delivering? These are questions for future investigation.

144 For example, one might observe how the horizontal stroke is consistently written with a bend and how the final stroke of the mouth (kou 口) radical is always elongated. I am grateful to Uta Lauer for these observations and for pointing out to me that the idiosyncracies are consistent.

145 Huang Shizhong, who first noticed the phenomenon of a repeated hand signing the title pages of manuscripts, has suggested that this person may have been the proprietor of the shop (Huang 2008, 151).


147 It is not clear to me how the manuscripts would originally have been bound (whether each hui was its own volume, or whether several hui were bound into one volume).

148 Comparison with a manuscript (from the Chewangfu corpus) of the same title, contained in Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 8, 3109, shows that eight lines were skipped here.
Fig. 24: Scribal hands in fourteen youth book manuscripts, from Capital Library of China, yi 448, vols 1–4.
Fig. 26. Scribal hands in a 12 hui (chapter) text, Qiao dongfeng zidi shu, from Capital Library of China, yi 巳 448, vol. 6.
Conclusion

From anecdotal sources to manuscripts, this article has attempted to piece together a picture of Baiben Zhang’s operations, while much remains to be understood – from the evolution of the scribal publisher over time to its role in the larger circulation of entertainment literature in Qing Beijing. While it may have been an outstandingly successful case, Baiben Zhang belonged to a milieu of shops that thrived on the sales of handwritten books. We might pause for a moment to reflect on the scale of their productions and the conditions that made it possible.

A sense of scale can be had from a survey of the extant literature of youth books that was so popular in Beijing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among thousands of extant items, the significant proportion that bears signs of their commercial origin suggests that scribal publishers dominated the market for books in this genre. Whether by number of texts or variety of titles, the figures for extant manuscripts of commercial origin far exceed those for woodblock-printed books, pointing to Beijing’s scribal publishers – Baiben Zhang foremost among them – as the leading producers of this popular regional literature. What is important to note is that the youth book was but one of a spectrum of products offered by Baiben Zhang; judging by the quantity of extant manuscripts in this genre alone, the shop’s overall output must have been enormous indeed.

The success of Baiben Zhang leads us to reflect on the urban context in which it thrived, given Beijing’s vibrant cultures of entertainment; its large population of leisurely consumers, from bannermen to sojourners; and the ready pool of literate laborers in the capital, from examinees to clerks. In such a context, the advantages of a business model based on hand-copying books would have been many: from locally sourced texts to local scribal labor to a local clientele, it avoided the cost of transporting woodblocks and books while keeping products new and up-to-date. With the ease of scribal production – requiring only brush, paper, desk and copyist – it needed little initial investment, while the flexibility of handwritten production makes possible an enormous variety of products copied on demand. If profit did not come from a huge number of copies of a single text, variety made up for it, while the wide availability of scribal labor and value attached to the calligraphic medium may have together contributed to high profit margins for the manuscripts as collectibles. In some sense, Baiben Zhang’s success can be attributed to an old scribal technology put to use in a new urban context, where the changing vogue of entertainment – which saw their height in late nineteenth-century Beijing – generated desire for an ever-increasing variety of books.

Baiben Zhang and other scribal publishers formed a special milieu in China’s changing book markets of the nineteenth century. In a time when new printing technologies came to be widely adopted and when commercial print publishers sought out new markets and audiences, they point to the lasting presence of a thriving, local book market tied intimately to the cultural life of the city. Beijing’s uniqueness as a locale must have been part of the story. The fondness with which Baiben Zhang is remembered with its temple markets in anecdotal sources calls attention to cycles of culturally shared time, whose own ebbs and flows in connection to technological change need further study. Just as people from far and wide came together in the space of the fair, so the books belonged to a larger flow of commodities, mixing old and new, cheap and extravagant, handwritten and printed, invented and recycled. It is within this larger context that they must be studied next.

149 For detailed figures supporting the statements in this paragraph, see Lu 2018.

150 For reasons that will be explored elsewhere, the youth book was privileged by collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they are much more accessible today as a corpus in libraries and archives than books in many other genres that were also important product lines for Baiben Zhang. The list in Appendix 1 gives the breakdown by genre for a large group of manuscripts collected in 1929; there the count of zidi shu comes after Kun Yi and erhuang.

151 On China’s changing book markets of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Brokaw and Reed 2010.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Texts contained in Baiben Zhang manuscripts discovered by Liu Fu in 1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>erhuang</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kun Yi</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zidi shu</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matou diao</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ganban</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaqu</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dagu shu</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paizi qu</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lianhua lao</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuai shu</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huguang diao</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qinjiang</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xijiangye</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bianguan diao</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fujian diao</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinan diao</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shiduohua</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taipingnian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>danghuchuan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dasijing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laoting diao</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xianhua diao</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qunqu</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shibeijiu</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shachuangwai</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiujiuzhou</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 2,124 texts

**Footnote:** Fu 1954a, 329, recounts that Liu Fu 刘復 discovered over 80 sacks of Baiben Zhang manuscripts at an unnamed Liulichang bookshop in 1929. Probably the categories in the above list (which range from names of genres to types of tunes) come from labels that are commonly found on title pages of manuscripts. Judging by Fu’s wording, the numbers should refer to counts of distinct texts in each category, and not physical volumes (the term he uses is zhong 种 [‘kind’]). Fu notes that these books were all purchased by the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica under Liu’s suggestion, but mistakenly records that they were lost in a shipwreck. A search for ‘Baiben Zhang’ through the Fu Sinian Library’s electronic catalog today reveals several hundred items – there may be many more that were not catalogued as such but in fact come from Baiben Zhang.
### Table 1: Sales catalogs, listed by house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Collection and shelfmark (where known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baiben Zhang</strong> 百本张</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books</td>
<td>Capital Library of China, yi己1008[155]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang xi mulu 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of erhuang opera)</td>
<td>Capital Library of China, yi己1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang xi mulu 高腔戲目錄 (Catalog of gao qiang opera)</td>
<td>Capital Library of China, ding丁6610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)</td>
<td>Capital Library of China, yi己473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)</td>
<td>Capital Library of China, yi己459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang xi mulu 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of erhuang opera)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[156]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang xi mulu 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of erhuang opera)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[157]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogu shu dan 大鼓書單 (List of big-drum tales)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[158]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang xi mulu 高腔戲目錄 (Catalog of gao qiang opera)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[159]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao shangqu dan 馬頭調上趣單 (Catalog of port tunes)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[160]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao shangqu mulu 馬頭調上曲目錄 (Catalog of port tunes)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[161]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[162]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[163]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of big-drum tales</td>
<td>Kansai University, L23 D 6478[164]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bieyetang 別埜堂</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geyang kuaishu mulu 各樣快書目錄 (Catalog of various fast tales)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[165]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts[166]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books</td>
<td>Hebei University Library[167]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jujuantang 聚巻堂</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bajiao gu shidao qu lianzhu diao paizi qu qingdan 八角鼓時道曲連珠調牌子曲清單 (Clear list of linked tunes: eight-cornered drum songs, tunes-of-the-times, jingles)</td>
<td>Capital Library, yi己1008[168]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leshantang 樂善堂</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books</td>
<td>Fu Sinian Library, TJ27-212[169]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the items listed below are manuscripts. I have assembled this provisional list from archival visits and various secondary sources, but there may be still more items that are extant. Typically, sales catalogs from scribal publishers contain lists of titles with prices and are themselves marked with a price. Below, they are listed by house where known, and ordered alphabetically by collection. Catalogs from the Fu Sinian Library whose provenance needs further research are listed separately. Finally, in cases where the status of an item is not clear to me (e.g. I have not seen it and a secondary source says that it does not contain prices), or where it is clearly a list of a different kind (e.g., an inventory), I have indicated this in a footnote and listed the item under the section ‘Other’ at the end of this appendix. The catalogs of youth books have thus far received the most scholarly attention; see Chen 2003b, Cui 2005, 117–119, and Huang 2012, 2–3, which includes photo reprints of pages from several of them. Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, has made available the catalogs from Buyetang and Leshantang in typeset form and includes a list of titles collated from several Baiben Zhang catalogs. The collation notes do not, however, point out all the differences between the list and what is contained in the manuscripts used for collation.

The titles on manuscripts are listed (in italics) where known; otherwise a description is given.

This catalog is described in Fu 1954a, 319–321. Manuscripts from Fu Xihua’s personal collection, which went to the Chinese National Academy of Arts, are not presently accessible to the public.

See Fu 1954a, 319–321.

See Fu 1954a, 322.

This particular catalog contains lists of titles and volumes, without prices; given that the title page is labeled with a price, I have classified it as a sales catalog.

The library’s electronic catalog gives its title as Zidi dagu shu mulu 子弟大鼓書目錄 (Catalog of youth books and big-drum tales), following what is written on the first folio inside the book, but this folio does not belong with the others (the book has been rebound and the original title page is no longer extant). This is a catalog of youth books and does not contain big-drum tales.
Table 2: Catalogs at the Fu Sinian Library for further study.178

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title in the library’s electronic catalog</th>
<th>Shelfmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mu 大鼓書目</td>
<td>Tj27-210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mu 大鼓書目</td>
<td>Tj27-211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi shu mulu 子弟書目錄</td>
<td>Tj27-213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mulu 大鼓書目錄</td>
<td>Tj27-214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zidi dagu shu mulu 子弟大鼓書目錄</td>
<td>Tj27-215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mulu 大鼓書目錄</td>
<td>Tj27-216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mulu 大鼓書目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagu shu mulu 大鼓書目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Za paizi mulu 雜牌子目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao mulu 馬頭調目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang mulu 二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaqu mulu 雜曲目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaqu mulu 雜曲目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao mulu 馬頭調目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao mulu 馬頭調目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao mulu 馬頭調目錄</td>
<td>Tj28-226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunqiang mulu 昆腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj29-227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu 高腔.昆腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj29-228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu 高腔.昆腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj29-229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu 高腔.昆腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj29-230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaoqiang mulu 高腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj29-231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang, Kunqiang mulu 二簧.昆腔目錄</td>
<td>Tj30-232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang mulu 二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj30-233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang mulu 二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj30-234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zengbu erhuang mulu 增補二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj30-235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xin erhuang mulu 新二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj31-236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erhuang mulu 二簧目錄</td>
<td>Tj31-237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Za qu mulu 雜曲目錄</td>
<td>Tj31-238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matou diao mulu 馬頭調目錄</td>
<td>Tj31-239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3: Other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Collection and shelfmark (where known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of songs in various genres</td>
<td>Chinese National Academy of Arts qu 曲 309.60 / 0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>Fu Sinian Library, Tj28-225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>Fu Sinian Library, Tj31-240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of a catalog of youth books (?)</td>
<td>Hebei University Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books (?)</td>
<td>National Library of China, wen 文 571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books (?)</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog of youth books (?)</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are catalogs at the library whose provenance needs further research. For each item, I have given the title listed in the library's online catalog, but they do not in all cases accurately reflect the content of the books. All the manuscripts have been rebound, and most are missing their original covers/title pages. A number contain partial folios from what originally were multiple catalogs. Tj27-210, Tj27-211, Tj27-213 and Tj30-234 contain title pages bearing Baiben Zhang stamps, but in at least one case (Tj27-213), the differences in paper suggest that the folios did not originally all belong together. I did not find stamps from copying houses in the other items, but they share the usual sales catalog format of listing prices beneath titles. I have arranged the list by shelfmark.

This item, dated to 1886, is described as *Ganban paizi kuashu chaqu matou diao ge yang qumu* 趕板牌子快書岔曲馬頭調各樣曲目 (List of various swift beats, linked tunes, fast tales, ditties, and port tunes) in Huang 2012, 7; also see Chen 2017, 51‒54. It is not clear to me if it is in fact a sales catalog from a scribal publisher, as these manuscripts are hardly ever dated.

This single sheet, containing a list of abbreviated titles with notes, is rebound together with a sales catalog.

This item of nine folios contains running lists of titles in various genres, with triangles indicating tallies. The first seven folios form one inventory, and the last two form another.

Chen 2000, 221 note 20, suggests this may be a later-made copy of a sales catalog from Baiben Zhang (but gives no further details).

The library’s electronic catalog gives the title of this item as *Zidi shu mulu* 子弟書目錄 ('catalog of youth books') and describes it as a manuscript in two volumes, dated between the second half of the nineteenth century and the early Republican period. No further information is given, but very possibly this is a sales catalog from a scribal publisher.

This item is described in Huang 2012, 2, as a Baiben Zhang catalog of youth books from the former collection of Nagasawa Kikuya. The photo reprint of a page from the manuscript included with the description shows that titles and numbers of chapters are listed, but not prices, so it is not clear to me if it is in fact a sales catalog. The original cover of the manuscript is apparently missing (ref. Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4358). Huang does not specify the present location of this item.

Huang 2012, 2, describes this item as a Baiben Zhang catalog with a later cover signed by the collector Lütang yinguan 綠棠吟館. ‘Complete list of youth book verses, a base copy from Baiben Zhang’ (*Zidi shu ciqu quanmu Baiben Zhang diben* 子弟書詞曲全目 百本張底本). That it is described as a ‘base copy’ raises the question whether it is in fact a sales catalog. Huang does not specify the present location of this item.
Appendix 3: Announcement from Baiben Zhang

計開石派書列後

風波亭一部現有
九頭案以後，從南俠暗行、婆子哭墓起，合計六十餘本，要者定抄。再，本堂有數樣石韻之書未能得全，現在託人挽轉。全行得妥，較正明白，再行定抄可也。

今將未能得妥之石派書名列後

四郎探母 五本十六囘
三矮奇聞 三本九囘
義俠記 十本三十囘
混元盒 兩本六囘
鳯儀亭 兩本六囘
長坂坡 兩本六囘
下河南 五本十五囘
長生殿 兩本六囘
二心間 即真假幻 兩本六囘
二度槑 八本三十二囘
仙俠緣 聊齋紅玉 兩本六囘
綺閣春 聊齋馬介甫 四本十二囘
誅門醒夢 兩本六囘
撞天婚 兩本六囘

京都百本張具

178 I am grateful for Prof. Chen Jinzhao for generously sharing this source with me. I do not know the shelfmark for this item at the Fu Sinian Library. The text appears to be complete on a single sheet of paper. The punctuation below is mine.

179 The characters jingdu Baiben Zhang 京都百本張 come from a stamp, while the character ju 具 is handwritten.
List of pending Shi-style tales to follow

The title *The Pavilion of Trouble* is readily available.
As for the plot after *The Case of the Nine Heads*, from *Secret Ventures of the Southern Knight* to *The Old Woman Weeps at the Grave*, there are a total of over sixty volumes. They can be copied to order upon demand. Moreover, there are a number of Shi-style tales that this house has not been able to obtain in their entirety; at present we have employed someone to look for the missing parts, and the texts can be copied to order once they are complete and corrected.

For the moment, those incomplete Shi-style tales are listed as follows:

*Silang Visits His Mother*, 16 chapters in 5 volumes

*Marvels of the Three Midgets*, 9 chapters in 3 volumes

*The Knights’ Chronicle*, 30 chapters in 10 volumes

*The Box of Primordial Chaos*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Phoenix Pavilion*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Battle at Changban Hill*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Going down to Henan*, 15 chapters in 5 volumes

*The Palace of Everlasting Life*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Battle of the Two Minds* (i.e. *The Illusion of Reality*), 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Second Bloom*, 32 chapters in 8 volumes

*The Fairy and the Knight* (or *Hongyu*, from *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*), 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Spring at the Pavilion* (or *Ma Jiefu*, from *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*), 12 chapters in 4 volumes

*Reprimanding Yama and Waking from the Dream*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*A Marriage by Heaven’s Arrangement*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

From Baiben Zhang of the Capital
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