

Scaling the Ming

An International Conference

May 18–19, 2018

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Paper Titles and Abstracts

PANEL 1 GLOBAL CLIMATE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Desmond Cheung (Portland State University) *Scaling Locusts: Environmental Statecraft in Ming China*

Locusts were a persistent problem in imperial China. The late Ming era suffered many infestations, including in the Yangzi valley—an area relatively marginal to locust attacks, which most often occurred in Shandong, Hebei, and Henan. How did Ming officials respond to these threats? To what extent did they develop a system of environmental statecraft to control locusts?

This paper will show how considerations of scale—temporal, geographical/environmental, administrative—are central to how Ming statesmen conceptualized the locust menace and how to combat it. By applying knowledge of the locust’s lifecycle and behavior, they scaled their approach temporally to catch the insects before the dangerous phase when they became swarming locusts. The geographical scale was important too. Ming observers noted that locusts were more likely to arise in uncultivated, overgrown areas that became flooded. One strategy was thus to drain and clear land. But how far did they need to extend these measures? To what extent did administrative boundaries across similar environments pose obstacles? These questions are inseparable from the third scale: administration. How did officials at the provincial and central levels of government coordinate and strengthen locust control efforts?

This paper will seek to determine how these different scales through which Ming officials conceptualized and combatted locusts were interrelated, and how such a correlated approach constituted a system of environmental governance. It will also ask how the integration of Ming records with modern scientific data might further understanding of Chinese and environmental history during the seventeenth century ‘global crisis’.

Kathlene Baldanza (Penn State University) *Miasmatic Mists of the Mountains: Medicine and Environment in the Sino-Viet Borderlands*

“Miasma” 瘴 indicates both a climatic condition of vapors or mist, and the illnesses these conditions caused. It often appears as part of a compound word: miasmatic pestilence 瘴癘, miasmatic poison 瘴毒, miasmatic rain 瘴雨, and most commonly, as miasmatic qi 瘴氣. Miasma was often used in poetry to evoke an alien and mysterious natural setting. However, it was not merely a poetic trope, but a real environmental condition and disease agent. In premodern sources, miasma appears nearly everywhere, but was described more commonly as a feature of highland areas of what are now southwestern China and northern Vietnam. In this paper, I argue that miasma was an important factor in limiting or slowing state expansion into these regions. I will survey the areas where miasma was located and the techniques and medicines that were used to avoid or treat its devastations. The disease environment that created miasma also provided fertile ground for efficacious anti-miasma drugs, including pangolin scales, monkey bones and blood, tobacco, and other highland plants and animals.

Timothy Brook (UBC) *Environmental Drivers of Ming Epidemics*

Breakthroughs in genome sequencing since 2010 now make it possible to write a global history of the plague. The reluctance to undertake archaeological DNA research in China limits what we know presently about the history of the plague in China before the 19th century. Still, what research we do have allows us to revisit the old question of whether China was the origin of the Black Death in Europe, and to consider whether epidemic disease was a significant factor in the rise of the Ming.

Wu Ting-chih (University of Pennsylvania) *Natural Disasters, Irrigation Canals, and the Production of Grain: The Case of Ningxia in the Ming Period*

During the Ming period, Ningxia became one important defensive region along the borders of the Ming dynasty. It was important for the Ming state to maintain the production of grain to support soldiers in Ningxia. To ensure the production of grain, the Ming state had to sustain cultivated lands by maintaining irrigation canals at this place. However, continual natural disasters, such as the drought and the floods, made it hard for people here to sustain cultivated lands and ensure the production of grain. Thus, after intermittent natural disasters, the Ming state had to implement irrigation projects again and again. Different natural disasters respectively affected human activities in different periods. Before 1500, the drought mainly propelled the Ming state to repair canals in Ningxia. After 1500,

the floods became the most urgent problem here. Inevitably, the Ming state took different ways to maintain irrigation canals in response to different natural disasters. Thus, human activities were shaped by environmental factors.

The change in the main environmental factor in shaping irrigation projects might also alter people's attitudes towards the production of grain. Before 1500, the Ming state continually tried to increase the storage of grain in Ningxia by expanding cultivated lands. After 1500, due to intermittent floods, few officials intended to do the same thing. By showing the correlation between natural disasters and human activities, this paper argues that environmental factors played an important role in determining human behaviors and actions.

PANEL 2, THE BODY'S PERSPECTIVE

Chelsea Zi Wang (Claremont McKenna College) *Transcending Bureaucratic Scale: The Immediacy of Remoteness in Ming Triennial Audiences*

To the tens of thousands of officials serving in provinces, the Ming court was a remote entity. Most found themselves separated from the court not only by physical distance, but also by many layers of higher offices that supervised them. Consequently, the court faced a difficult challenge of preventing spatial and bureaucratic distance from turning into emotional aloofness, for only then could it ensure the continued commitment and loyalty of these provincial officials.

This presentation uses the example of triennial audiences (*chaojin* 朝覲) to reveal the Ming state's unique approach for maintaining control over its provincial officials. Every three years ahead of New Year's Day, head officials of every province, prefecture, and county travelled personally to Beijing to attend an imperial audience and to undergo personnel evaluations. Even though the trips generated great costs and removed officials from their posts for months, the court insisted on participation by all eligible officials except for those who served in the farthest frontiers or whose areas of jurisdiction suffered from urgent and unexpected disturbances. In terms of the number and rank of officials who participated, these audiences were disproportionate in scale compared to similar practices of other Chinese dynasties, which showed a greater willingness to accept the reality of remoteness between centre and local. By contrast, the Ming sought to transcend this remoteness by maintaining brief but consistent physical connections between the two, a manifestation of its strong preference for the direct and concrete over the remote and abstract.

Dagmar Schäfer (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science) *The Working Hand: Scaling Bodies of Expertise in Ming Local Gazetteers*

In Ming China work usually related to the state. Literati in service of state bureaucracy recruited craftsmen for various forms of corvée labour in state owned manufacture or construction projects. Especially in their function as local officials and tax purveyors, they identified the craftsman's specialization and task. Although they hardly named it as such they hence developed a language for bodies of skills and expertise, generic ones such as carpenters (*mujiang* 木匠), smiths (*tiejiang* 鐵匠), and weavers (*zhijiang* 織匠) or dyers (染匠) as well as (for us rather) obscure designations of female workers (女匠) or heavenly craftsmen (天匠). This contribution will discuss the representation of civil and military corvée labour (*yaoyi* 徭役) in Local Gazetteers of the early to end Ming era. How was labour recorded and in which way were tasks identified in craftsman namings? Can we identify local origins of task definitions, differences, top-down or bottom developments? Looking at the consistency of data I inquire, how information spread (if at all), which modi of abstraction were adopted for the various levels (local, regional, provincial). Whereas Local Gazetteers are regularly used as a source of information on localities, I am as much interested in the role of Local Gazetteers on standards of validity and their impact on the recognition of craftsmanship and craft 'expertise' on the local and state level in general as well as how the genre reflected back as a whole on a locality's resources. This research is based on digital humanities research methods developed in the context of the Local Gazetteer project at the MPIWG, combined with close reading on related text sources.

Volker Scheid (University of Westminster) *From Acupuncture Channels to Topographic Regions: Herbalising the Acupuncture Body in Late Ming China*

Academic, clinical and popular discourse on Chinese medicine generally contrast a western interest in structure and anatomy with a Chinese interest in function and process. Historical exceptions to these generalisations, like the well-known anatomical studies of Wang Qingren 王清任 (1768–1831), are depicted as anomalies: one of the few Chinese to take anatomy seriously, or an outlier whose strange interests can at least partially be explained by the fact that he seems to have had unwitting access to an indirect transmission of Jesuit anatomy. I will argue that by attending to re-imaginings of the body in late Ming, Wang Qingren's studies can be re-contextualised, instead, as part of ongoing attempts to rethink medicine and the body. These attempts were spearheaded by a group of physicians critical of post-Song interpretations of the works of Zhang Zhongjing, a Han dynasty author widely regarded to be the ancestor of formula based

pharmacotherapy. A key aspect of these interpretations was that they drew on other Han and pre-Han texts like the Inner Canon and the Canon of Difficulties, texts whose therapeutic focus was on acupuncture and moxibustion, to explain an approach rooted almost entirely in pharmacotherapy. Late Ming critics of these interpretations, instead, attempted to understand Zhang Zhongjing's approach independent of these other canons. This gradually led them to a concern for topography, territoriality and anatomical contiguity as opposed to acupuncturists' interest in organs, conduits and logics of resonance. Such re-imaginings of the body went hand-in-hand with a reconceptualisation of medicine itself from one that emphasised harmony to one focused on warfare. I will discuss this transformation from a number of angles: from changes in diagrammatic depictions of the body and the metaphors used to discuss therapeutic interventions to the challenges these new bodies posed to medical authors and their readers. I will also reflect on what tools we, as historians, need to understand such transformations beyond the discourse of modernity that has so obviously hindered us from seeing them when they have always been clearly in front of our eyes.

Wu Yinghui (UCLA) *Scaling and Pictorial Imagination in the Late Ming*

The late Ming visual culture shows deft manipulation of sizes, proportions, and perspectives. In paintings and pictures, in the art of garden and theatre, the shift between different spatial and temporal scales served to associate the past with the present, self with universe, and the locale with the empire. This paper explores how strategies of scaling worked in representing bodies and spaces in late Ming book illustrations, and how they structured the economy and culture of viewing.

Within the frame of a woodblock image, the pictorial components and their sizes vary significantly across different editions. The shrinking and enlarging of figures, and the extension and compression of distances, suggest different scopes of vision and positions of looking. I analyze the effect of scaling in three modes of pictures: the close-up, the panoramic, and the moderately distanced mode. The close-up pictures, with prominent facial expressions and bodily poses, highlight dramatic tension; the panoramic pictures, with miniature figures amid lush plants and architectural complex, foreground the artificiality of refined life; in the moderately distanced mode, individual figures proportionately placed in the landscape evoke the poeticality of self within the cosmos. From the close-up to the panoramic, as the size of figures decreases, the picture requires less and less emotional involvement, and the reader shifts from participatory viewing to detached observing. As book illustrations combined and adjusted the divergent scales in landscape and figure painting, they exhibited the advantages and

limitations of woodblock printing in producing and popularizing new forms of pictorial imagination.

PANEL 3, LARGE WITHIN SMALL: LANDSCAPE, GARDEN, ROCK, FLOWER

Aurelia Campbell (Boston College) *Issues of Scale and Memory in Emperor Yongle's Mount Wudang*

Between the years 1412 and 1424, as his palaces were being built in the capital, the Yongle emperor was deeply engaged in another important architectural project: the reconstruction of a great number of Daoist temples dedicated to the deity Zhenwu on Mount Wudang, an expansive mountain range located in present day Hubei province. This paper examines the issue of scale in relation Yongle's Mount Wudang. Following the completion of the reconstruction project, the mountain achieved a newfound level of conceptual and architectural coherency.

Furthermore, a small bronze hall that crowned the summit subsequently came to symbolize Mount Wudang as a whole. I argue that these features enabled the massive mountain full of temples to be much more easily distilled and reproduced—in the mind, in paintings, in bronze statues, and even full-scale on other mountains. The reproductions naturally generated great publicity for Mount Wudang, which not only bolstered the mountain's national reputation, but also continued to shape the popular perception of Yongle well after his death.

Eventually Yongle's identity became closely intertwined with that of Zhenwu and Mount Wudang came to be considered an important counterpart to the palaces in Beijing.

Kathleen Ryor (Carleton College) *The Hundred Flowers and Myriad Things: Flower Cultivation as Cosmos in the Mid-Late Ming*

The rapid expansion of garden building and garden culture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the Ming dynasty saw a corresponding rise in the number and types of plants cultivated in these spaces. Through an examination of paintings and printed illustrations of flowers and plants, as well as a variety of texts on both individual plants and floriculture, this paper will argue that floriculture was not merely a fashionable aesthetic pastime for the elite, but constituted a way of understanding the world of man and the cosmos.

Representations of flowers and plants in texts and images of this period suggest that various plant species were viewed coterminously as emblems of the diverse qualities of man and his societal sphere, as microcosmic agents that contained the fundamental principles of the natural world, and as proxies for the larger

landscape. The selection of plant species and their different individual varieties could create a moral universe within the confines of a garden, which reflected its owner and his character through time (the seasons of the year) and space (the garden's design) At the same time, the discourse surrounding garden plants merged the symbolic with the physical. These plants often appealed to all five of the senses since many of them were ingested as food, medicine or as a flavoring for tea and wine. As a result, floriculture also blurred the boundary between the natural world and the commodity during the mid to late Ming period.

Richard John Lynn (University of Toronto) *A Study of Wu Bin's Paintings Scroll "Ten Views of a Lingbi Rock"* (Shimian lingbi tu 十面靈璧圖)

This paper will discuss all figures associated with Wu Bin's scroll: Li Weizhen 李維楨 (1547-1626), Wu Bin 吳彬 himself (c. 1547-c.1627), Zou Diguang 鄒迪光 (1550-1626), Xing Tong 邢侗 (1551-1612), Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636), Ye Xianggao 葉向高, (1562-1627), Mi Wanzhong 米萬鐘 (1570-1628), Zhang Shiyi 張師繹 (1575-1633), Gao Chu 高出 (1579 -c.1630), and four prominent 19th century Manchu officials who either owned or were associated with the scroll, Saying'a 薩迎阿 (1779-1857), Wenfu 文孚 (1765-1841), Tuohunbu 托渾布 (1799-1843), and Qiying 耆英 (Keying) (1787-1858). A PowerPoint Presentation will present and analyse the paintings and colophons in terms of late Ming literati social relations and intellectual and aesthetic values. The rock was owned by Mi Wanzhong and kept at his Zhanyuan Garden 湛園 (Garden of Tranquility), located to the east of his main residence, west of the Bohai in Beijing, the Manyuan 漫園 (Water Everywhere Garden). His third garden, the Shao Garden 勺園 (Ladle Garden) was located within the grounds of what later became National Peking University, an area which is still known by that name. These three gardens figure importantly in the history of Wu Bin's scroll and were places where the Ming colophon writers came to visit and enjoy garden culture; Wu Bin painted the rock at the Zhanyuan. This scholar's rock provides a focus for analysis of the role of gardens in Ming literati life, as exemplified by the figures associated with the Wu Bin scroll.

Pang Huiping (Art Institute of Chicago) *"Planting Fungus at the Tiaosou-an Cottage": The Rise and Fall of the Garden Builder Chen Jiru (1558-1639)*

In the late Ming era (1550-1644), a surge of politicians built gardens to broadcast their scholarly identities. This retreat took two forms: prominent ministers who successfully climbed the political ladder created gardens in cosmopolitan centers to show off their power. Those who failed examinations disguised themselves as hermits, constructing gardens in remote mountains. Despite their camouflage as

mountain-hermits, some failed men became cultural leaders; they socialized with grand secretaries, thus earning the derisive sobriquet, “Prime Ministers of the Mountains.” One such figure is Chen Jiru (1558–1639), a failed examinee who fled to the mountains to avoid political strife, yet whose engagement in society won him seven parcels of land in six mountains, including the Tiaosou-an garden. Utilizing the painting *Planting Fungus at the Tiaosou-an* as a case study, this paper investigates the authenticity of the painting and its two inscriptions, which have been attributed to Dong Qichang (1555–1636) and Chen Guan (act. 1608–1647) and which claim that the garden-owner Chen Jiru celebrated his seventieth birthday in his Tiaosou-an in 1627. By delving into the topographical reality at Tiaosou-an garden, writings from Jiru’s circle, and evidence about his social networks circa 1627, this paper explores Chen Jiru’s garden building enterprise, the rise and fall of his posthumous reputation during the Ming-Qing transition, and how such reputational change helps us to reevaluate the story behind the *Planting Fungus* painting.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden University) *Collusion, Competition, and Compromise: Rethinking the Scale of Portuguese Interaction with Ming China 1510–1557*

This paper aims to re-assess the scale of Portuguese interaction with China before the Ming state granted the leasehold of Macao to these Europeans. Although much scholarship on the first Sino-Portuguese encounters has focused on the animosity that both central government and local officials generated toward these Europeans, recent research has demonstrated that by the early 1510s the Ming state had already sought to reassert control over trade with, and make profit from Southeast Asian kingdoms. After the Portuguese takeover of Melaka, the Europeans teamed up with Fujianese (Hokkien) merchants who guided them into the islets south of Guangzhou where they were considered by local officialdom yet one more group of Southeast Asian traders, and thus allowed to reside temporarily under the watch of *yahang* (Chinese sales agents). But the failure of Portugal’s attempt to gain official tribute status after 1521, due in part to its endeavor to build a fort on Tunmen island as well as its reputation for purchasing Chinese slaves (via the *yahang*), drove the Europeans (now forbidden to engage in any further trade) into even greater collusion with the Fujianese whose extensive coastal smuggling networks helped create the Portuguese emporium at Shuangyu (Zhejiang). The profits of this illegal trading center, however, did not go unnoticed by Guangzhou authorities who realized the competition with neighboring Fujian

and its officials shielding the law-breakers did themselves no economic good in the long run, a scenario which led them to compromise and urge the state to extend trading rights to the Portuguese and three years later the Macao leasehold. This paper thus brings issues of border security, (illicit) naval military organization, and monarchical control into the broader sweep of changing Southeast Asian and Chinese relations in a new Global South.

PANEL 4, NEW APPROACHES TO MING CHINA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

Christopher Eirkson (University of Pittsburgh) *Demonolithizing the Ming Great Wall: Steppe Frontier Wall-Building as a Eurasian Phenomenon*

This paper seeks to unseat the Great Wall as a monolithic, mythologized object in Chinese and world history. Specifically, it examines how historians of early-modern China and Muscovy/Russia have approached wall-building projects along their respective steppe frontiers. The Ming Dynasty and the Grand Duchy of Moscow both sponsored the construction of fortified steppe frontier walls as projects to defend against nomadic incursion and conduct offensive operations. However, the Great Wall – in both past and present forms – remains physically and metaphorically monolithic in our interpretations of China's history and the history of its relations with the steppe.

The goal is to suggest how historians of China might look to other regional historiographies in order to unseat embedded notions of nomadic-sedentary divides, and in doing so free Ming scholars to conduct meaningful comparative studies of the Ming Dynasty in post-Mongol Eurasia. Despite important scholarship produced in the last decade that has done much to complicate nomadic-sedentary relationships in early-modern China, those divides remain a substrate of frontier histories. If we place Chinese-nomadic military interactions within a Eurasian-wide spectrum, we might disengage such interactions from embedded notions of Confucian civilization and Han/non-Han identity.

Ilsoo Cho (Harvard University) *Realism over Loyalism: Korea in the Ming War Against the Manchus*

The relationship between Ming China and Chosŏn Korea has often been described as the model tributary relationship, and this argument is particularly applicable in explaining the post-1592 period. Without the Ming expeditionary forces that bore the brunt of the fighting against the Japanese, the late 16th century Japanese invasions of Korea certainly would have resulted in the Japanese conquest and absorption of the peninsula. Having “saved” the Koreans from certain defeat, a

notion that the Koreans themselves repeatedly acknowledged in public, the Ming dynasty expected and continually urged the Koreans to open a southern front in the war against the Manchus in the early 17th century. In this presentation, I will focus on the Korean diplomatic policy during the reign of King Injo (r. 1623–1649) of Korea, who is still misleadingly remembered as a fierce Ming loyalist. Contrary to the conventional historical narrative that Korea remained loyal to the Ming and its fight against the Manchus until the second Manchu invasion of 1637 forcefully severed the ties between the Ming and Korea, this presentation offers an alternative narrative that shows how political realism and expediency trumped the ideals of tributary relations. Despite the repeated calls for a pincer operation against the Manchus, the Korean policymakers displayed little interest in aiding the Ming at their hour of greatest need.

Liu Jing (Syracuse University) *Commerce, Pirates, and Military Men: Chinese-Korean Maritime Borders in the Early Seventeenth Century*

This study reveals the expansion of China's coastal military powers beyond the limits of Ming China and Chosŏn Korea's controls of their maritime borders in the 1600s and the 1610s, a period between the Imjin War and the rise of the Latter Jin in Liaodong to which less scholarly attention has been paid. Providing a maritime dimension and a cross-border perspective, this research aims to understand the interaction of this developing tendency of Ming military men with the transition of China and Korea's sea regions in the early seventeenth century.

This research first contextualizes the growth of Ming local military agencies into the enhanced militarization and weakened government controls of China and Korea's coastal areas after the Imjin War. It then analyzes how the mobilization of natural and human resources promoted the active involvement of Ming border military men into the thriving transnational trade in the early seventeenth century. Moreover, by focusing on Ming military officers Wu Zongdao and Wu Youfu's case, this research examines the blurring boundaries of their maritime economic activities with the rampant piracy in Korea's northwestern provinces, as well as their tensions with the Ming central government's authority in the border region. The nuanced responses of the Chosŏn and Ming courts, the Shandong and Liaodong local officials to handling this case further reflect the intertwinement between their respective stances and political relations.

Sunkyu Lee (UCLA) *Changes of Scales in Maps of Northern Border Territories between Fifteenth and Sixteenth century China*

Comparing maps made by officials between fifteenth and sixteenth century China, this paper traces how scales used in maps to depict northern borderland changed from a few strategic but seemingly discrete region to a panoramic vision of the entire border territories. I argue that this change of scales in the maps reflect a shift in Ming border governance in the sixteenth century. The new depiction of the entire northern border areas as an integrated space went along with a change in the expected role of each military garrison, which had previously been conceived as a discrete unit working independently from other neighboring units but in the sixteenth century became a part of the whole defense system defending the northern border territories. My paper demonstrates how this change of scales in the maps accorded with the increase of financial and bureaucratic intervention of the central court in northern border garrisons in response to a military crisis from northern nomadic neighbors starting from the mid-fifteenth century. In addition, my presentation will illustrate how the images of continuous borderlands in sixteenth century maps created a new kind of the imperial claim over the border territories, which no longer relied on the idea of China's cultural superiority but instead stressed the actual ability of the Ming state to control over the territory through military engagement.

PANEL 5, THIS MUCH WE KNOW: IDEAS AND INFORMATION

Sarah Basham (UBC) *The Individual Title as Microscope and Microcosm: Wu bei zhi 武備志 (1621) And the Social Production of Statecraft Knowledge*

This paper argues that an individual title by an individual compiler is an ideal scale for examining mechanisms of knowledge production for social gain outside the late Ming civil service. Using *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 (1621) and its compiler, Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594–1640), as a case study, I examine the social practices involved in the compilation and promotion of the book among literati circles using the rhetoric of statecraft and concrete studies (*jingshi xue* 經世學 and *shixue* 實學). Even with knowledge of statecraft, chances for success in the civil examinations were remote (see work by Benjamin Elman). Scholars have examined individual statecraft titles (eg. Dagmar Schäfer, Francesca Bray, and Georges Métalié), and others have described the importance of statecraft studies to the roaming culture of unsuccessful civil examinees (Zhao Yuan 趙園 and Wang Hung-tai 王鴻泰). However no one has engaged in an intimate study of the social practices of the compilers of statecraft works deployed in such circles. Inspired by Craig Clunas'

study of Wen Zhengming's (1470–1559) “enacting” of social relations through gifts, I examine Mao Yuanyi's communications with potential sponsors, patrons, and friends regarding *Wu bei zhi*. I argue that Mao Yuanyi invokes intergenerational networks of obligation, his production of *Wu bei zhi*, and devout patriotism to “enact” a reputation as a literate expert in military material, and to reconcile his own paid military service with disapproval from potential patrons.

Scarlett Jang (Williams College) *Emperors, Palace Eunuchs, and the Ming's Imperial Art Collection*

The size of China's imperial art collection waxed and waned, and frequently changed hands in accordance with dynastic cycles. Possession of the imperial art treasures signified not simply the taste, power, and wealth of the royal house but more importantly, its legitimacy to rule.

However, unlike Emperors Taizong of the Tang, Huizong of the Song, and Qianlong of the Qing dynasty, for example, Ming emperors were oblivious to the political symbolism of the imperial art collection. Both the emperors and palace eunuchs were responsible for the slow growth and fast dispersal of the imperial art treasures.

The imperial court did not have an art acquisition agency to regularly enrich its art collection; its growth depended on confiscations of artworks owned by disgraced government officials. Driven by pure avarice, some Ming emperors used imperial artworks as partial salary payment to the capital military officers, and some emperors sold imperial artworks to private art collectors for their own personal treasury, using palace eunuchs as their art brokers. Imperial artworks were randomly housed in various inner court storehouses without proper care and often disintegrated. Although some form of bookkeeping for the inner court storehouses existed, thefts were rampant, including those by the supervisors themselves. Palace eunuchs stole imperial art treasures for themselves and for profit. The imperial art collection was thereby disseminated into the contemporary art world outside the Forbidden City, inciting competition among private art collectors and art dealers.

Monica Klasing Chen (Leiden University) *For the People, from the People: The “Painting Section” (huapu men 畫譜門) of Ming Daily-Use Encyclopedias*

The literary elite is usually the focal point when discussing the production of cultural knowledge in China. This paper hopes to expand this narrow view by addressing the composition and production of texts on painting techniques.

Knowledge reproduced in daily-use encyclopedias (*riyong leishu* 日用類書) reached a large crowd of readers. Yet, little is known about the origin of the texts included in these compilations. In the “Painting Section” (*huapu men* 畫譜門) of encyclopedias, most texts are labeled as *jue* 訣 (formulae), being formulaic and easy to memorize. Where did this knowledge come from and who composed these texts?

By means of a philological analysis of the texts contained in the painting sections of almost thirty Ming daily-use encyclopedias, and a close reading of the paratexts attached to these texts prior to their inclusion in encyclopedias, this study attempts to understand the process and context in which they were recorded and who produced this knowledge.

This paper argues that (1) even though scholars took part in recording the texts, the knowledge circulated orally and was not always authored by the elite, and (2) that the increased attention scholars paid to the dissemination of practical knowledge, reflecting the Neo-Confucian desire to understand practical matters, motivated scholars to record popular knowledge, which did not, however, involve mastering the craft.

Nathan Vedal (Pennsylvania State University) *Scaling the Infinite: Diagrams and Information Compression in Ming China*

Ming thinkers were deeply concerned with the limits of observed knowledge. In an effort to comprehensively account for a range of phenomena, scholars turned to cosmological methods which they believed could surpass any single individual’s abilities of observation. Diagrams came to be employed in various fields of learning during this period as a way of succinctly notating the vast amounts of information generated through these methods. These cosmologically-informed diagrams in such fields as philology, astronomy, and medicine have been largely neglected, despite their pervasive appearance in Ming texts. Through a series of case studies, this paper examines the ways in which diagrams conveyed and condensed large quantities of information, and how literati justified their inclusion in scholarly texts. It also presents a set of hybrid diagrams that emerged as a result of interactions between Chinese and Jesuit scholars, which highlight both shared and differing approaches to “visual thinking” throughout the early modern world. Situating diagrams within a context of Ming intellectual culture, this paper argues that visualizing information served an important function in Ming knowledge-making as a response to new anxieties about objectivity and the limits of human observation.

PANEL 6, PEOPLE NEAR AND FAR**Eloise Wright (University of California, Berkeley) *Re-Defining Dali: the Production of a Locality in Ming Yunnan***

After the 1247 Mongol invasion, the city of Dali went from being the capital of the Dali Kingdom to a peripheral district in a remote province of a larger empire. By the sixteenth century, a literati community had established itself there, including officials, exiles, and military colonists as well as the descendants of the pre-Mongol Dali elite. Men from these families took the imperial examinations, served in other parts of the empire as officials, and participated in decision-making processes around local institutions as imperial scholar-gentry. How did these social and political changes—both large-scale and intimate—transform the ways Dali literati understood and experienced their hometown?

In this paper, I argue that the social practices that maintained literati networks on a local level were a critical factor in producing the spatial category of “locality” in the Dali region. Dali scholars visited each other’s libraries, toured sites of historical and religious significance, and sponsored the construction of academies, schools, and temples. At every stage, these practices interacted with physical geography, imperial administrative structures, existing trade networks, and local historical memory. In different contexts, “Dali” was a Ming prefecture, a defensible frontier fortress, a scenic landscape, a site of memorialization of the Nanzhao kingdom, and a regional economic center. As a result, “locality” was realized in Dali in ways that were dependent on, but did not sit comfortably with, political and social forces that were transforming its residents.

Hu Xiaobai (University of Pennsylvania) *Transformative “Qiang”: Ethnic Discourse, Frontier Crossing and Imperial Categorization on the Ming-Tibetan Borderland*

The Chinese government’s identification of “Qiang” as one of the fifty-five national minorities disguises the concept’s multi-layer connotation in the historical context. This paper examines the transformative meanings of “Qiang” in the Ming dynasty and extracts its history from the 1950s’ ethnic classification project. Prior to and during the early Ming, “Qiang” remained a romanticized designation that referred to the non-Han people in the west. However, along with the Tibetans’ penetration into the Ming’s western frontier in the 15th century, the Chinese began to make distinction between the “Qiang” and the Tibetans (Fan). Therefore, “Qiang” gradually morphed into a label for a specific territory, and “Qiang” people, in that sense, referred to the inhabitants of that particular region.

During the Zhengde and Jiajing Reigns, the Ming deployed a heavy army along its western frontier primarily to defend the frequent Mongol raids, but unexpectedly created chances for many Han-Chinese soldiers to desert across the border and de-Sinicize themselves with a new “Qiang” label. To deal with the blurred political and ethnic distinction, the Ming launched military campaigns to restore its local authority. After suppressing and de-Tibetanizing some “Qiang” chieftains, the Ming re-phrased the connotation of “Qiang” as “tamed barbarians” (*shufan*), a category in contrast to “ungoverned barbarians” (*shengfan*). Eschewing the primordialist and constructionist debate, this paper sheds specific light on the structuring process of an oft-simplified label. By situating the term’s ambiguity and flexibility in time and space, this paper revisits “ethnicity” as the predominating paradigm in Chinese frontier history studies.

Du Yongtao (Oklahoma State University) *A Local Identity Breakdown: Locality and the State in Huizhou’s Tax Controversy of 1577*

The influential scholarship on the localist turn and local identity in late imperial China often examines literati engagement with locality at either the prefecture or the county levels. But the scale of locality in literati local identity formation, particularly the shift of identity between different levels of local entity within the same place, has rarely been put under rigorous analysis. This paper examines one such instance of local loyalty breakdown, that is, the inter-county tax controversy of 1577 in Huizhou prefecture.

Due to centuries of literati efforts to construct local learning traditions and favorable local images, Huizhou prefectural identity was remarkably strong. Prefectural anthologies and gazetteers from the Song through the Ming consistently celebrated a shared pride in Huizhou. But in 1577, a resident of Huizhou’s She county suddenly declared that his county had, since the early Ming, solely been bearing the burden of the ‘Head Tax in Silk’ (Rending sijuan) which theoretically should have been applied to all six counties of Huizhou, and petitioned the authority to spread the tax demand evenly. The result was a litigation war between She and the other five counties. In the following several years, each side treated the other with the gravest enmity, and both sought justice from the state by emphasizing that they were all “naked babies of the state.” The case accentuates the fragility of common Huizhou identity, and raises questions about the flexibility of scale in local identity formation, as well as the poverty of locality as a source of political loyalty.

Wang Yuanfei (University of Georgia) *Turning Pirates: Vernacularity, Trade, and Race in Late Ming Narratives of Japanese*

This paper discusses the role vernacularity plays in Feng Menglong's *huaben* short story *Old Eight Yang's Remarkable Family Reunion in the Country of Yue* 楊八老越國奇逢. The fiction constructs an empire of fortune in which the vernacular language compromises and translates various linguistic registers including Japanese speech, early mandarin Chinese, and dialects. In this empire, the Chinese merchant, after learning how to speak Japanese and adopting Japanese customs, physically turns into a Japanese. But he still maintains the dialect and accent of Zhouzhi county of Xi'an prefecture. This story showcases a mercantile world in which race and ethnicity are both reified and destabilized. The world of money turns everything into the flow of the empire that keeps assimilating the exotic and the foreign. On the other hand, this world denigrates and fantasizes the Japanese pirates as the other to stabilize the world of commerce. By associating the Chinese vernacular representation and translation of Japanese language in the story with Chinese transcription of Japanese poems in the travelogue *Riben fengtu ji* 日本風土記, this paper will pay attention to how dialect and Japanese language are transcribed and translated in the written vernacular and the interrelationship between transcription, *huaben* fiction, and ballads.

PANEL 7, BOUNDED IN A NUTSHELL: WORLDS WITHIN WORDS

Wu Ying (Peking University) *The Exquisite Pavilions and the Landscapes Beyond in Tang Xianzu's Fu Poetry*

Tang Xianzu (1550–1616), poet and playwright of the late Ming dynasty, was mostly recognized for his play “The Peony Pavilion”. The play is very appealing for its romance, yet its scenario-setting in the “Pavilion” does have a sense for its own sake. Not only in his plays, “pavilions” are omnipresent in his poems and essays. As a pun for “stay”, a pavilion is conceived as a place to seek a short stay from the hustle and bustle of life. In a dozen of Tang Xianzu's *fu* [賦, rhymed verses of narration], the poet ushered us into the exquisite gardens, as if feeling the breeze across bamboos, or seeing the phoenix dwelling on the plane trees. Contrary to the serene stay beneath the pavilions, the trips to the mountains anticipate more “trekking” on the road to find a broader horizon in his *Fu* on landscapes.

This paper is supposed to present Tang Xianzu's perceptions on the landscapes, either exquisite as a pavilion, a crane, a cypress, or transcendental like the phoenix or a touch of dusk glow dwelling on the mountain, as elaborated in his *Fu* narrations. Meanwhile, each *fu* is accompanied with an introduction, recounting

the author's intention on writing the *fu*. The examination on Tang's *fu* on landscapes can also serve as a means helping us understand the distinctive mentality of the Ming literati, in appreciating the exquisite, seeking for seclusion, and longing for a journey beyond the mundane state of life.

Lynn Struve (Indiana University) *How Sizable is the Unreal? Scaling Ming Dreams*

This paper first discusses how one might claim that something unreal, something that occupies no space, something that cannot be objectively known—that is, dream stuff—was huge in the late Ming. It explores the sorts of evidence that might be cited, and even quantified, to assert that the latter half of the sixteenth century through end of the seventeenth qualifies as the most significant period in the long history of Chinese dream culture. Since we cannot know whether people dreamed more, or more vividly, during that period, how was their heightened dream sensibility expressed in ways that can be objectified and, thus, placed on comparative scales with other periods. Second, this paper examines certain philosophical and rhetorical uses of largeness and smallness in classic texts about dreaming—texts that often were cited, alluded to, or played upon in Ming times.

Thirdly, examples are given of how largeness and smallness, open and confined spaces, remoteness and closeness appear in Ming-period dream reports. These are discussed in terms of how they represent the psychological state of the dreamer, in ways that often are congruent with, but are not necessarily determined by, the received literary culture.

Thomas Kelly (University of Michigan) *World on a Walnut: Late Ming Literary Miniatures*

Throughout the late Ming, a number of prominent writers composed short literary accounts of carved fruit-stones (peach, plum, apricot or olive pits, and walnuts). These inventive essays, some still anthologized in school textbooks, use miniature curios to probe the limits of perception, interrogating the relationship between verbal description and new optical devices. This paper asks where the seventeenth century fascination with the “small” came from and how these innovative prose miniatures were understood by contemporary readers. I explore how late Ming essayists departed from earlier visions of the “miniature tableau,” fusing motifs from texts on landscape painting, gardens, the biographies of craftsmen, and exotic ornaments. Such literary experiments were predicated on a curious enchantment with, yet sustained effort to disavow the technical expertise that produced the fruit-stone miniature in the first instance. Mediating between

established literary conventions and new developments in early modern material culture, writings on fruit-stone carvings can be seen to embody the vicissitudes of the xiaopin (minor article) form in the late Ming. Starting in the seventeenth century, we see repeated efforts to attribute allegorical significance (either Buddhist or political) to the literary miniature. I conclude by looking at how these critical responses register a deeper anxiety with making sense of a seemingly senseless embrace of surface.

Wei Yinzong (UBC) *Literary Commentary and the Layout of Late-Ming Books*

Different from the annotation (*zhushu* 注疏) of Confucian classics, histories, and philosophical texts, which was mainly concerned with the meaning of the main text and the intent of the attributed author, Chinese literary commentary (*pingdian* 評點) focused on the textual characteristics, especially the literary features of the text, and tried to lead readers comprehending literary features from the textual characteristics, i.e., leaving aside the author and only appreciating the text per se. The literary commentary came into being during the Song dynasty (960–1279) under the influence of the development of civil service examination. It initially aimed at helping the examination candidates with the composition of classical prose. But applied to fictions and dramas in the Ming dynasty, this new interpretive method not only changed the way of the reception of the text and raised the status of fictions and dramas, but also modified the visual appearance of the Chinese book. Almost all of the fictions and dramas were commercially published. In order to attract more readers, publishers employed multi-register, multi-colour, book illustrations, etc. to try to include in each page as many kinds of commentary as possible. The case of literary commentary can show us how different agents, and political, social-economic and cultural factors worked together and shaped a particular cultural practice in a particular historical context.

PANEL 8, MEASURES OF CONTROL,

Liu Haiwei (University of Southern California) *Mandate and Manipulate: Prophecies as a Way of Constructing Political Legitimacy during the Yuan-Ming Transition*

Prophecies played a significant role in mobilizing the large scale anti-Yuan rebellions in the middle of the fourteenth century. But the question how Zhu Yuanzhang and other warlords took advantage of these prophecies in defending their respective claims to political legitimacy has not received adequate academic

attention. This paper examines the complex relationships between prophecies, political legitimacy and Confucian thought during the Yuan-Ming transition. By analyzing the texts of two widespread prophecies, this paper argues that these two prophecies originally reflected the popular dissatisfaction in Yuan society, caused by the huge gaps between the rich and the poor, and ethnic tensions between the Mongols and the Han people. By reinterpreting these prophecies, Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhang Shicheng successfully changed these prophecies into predictions of the fall of the Yuan and the rise of their respective regimes. The paper points out that later Zhu Yuanzhang incorporated the prophecies into Confucian narrative to construct himself a sage ruler. The paper argues that although anti-Yuan warlords used prophecies and popular religions to mobilize the rebellions, they finally had to manipulate them to reconcile them with Confucian thought. Confucianism was the single most important source of political legitimacy in late imperial China.

**Chen Shiau-Yun (Cornell University) *What Constituted “Loving Mothers”?*
*Authorizing and Controlling Mothers’ Violence in the Disciplining of Children in Ming Families***

This paper examines mothers’ “approved” violence in Ming families. I argue that the mother’s “proper” violent disciplining of children became not only a moral performance but a demonstration of intimacy between mothers (and sometimes stepmothers) and their children. Throughout dynasties, loving mothers (*cimu*) were criticized for spoiling their children without teaching them, which cultivated immoral behaviors. During the Ming, the criteria that constituted the real loving mother included both teaching and disciplining children with violence. This discourse was complicated by the distinction between the birthmother and the social mother. For example, while the Ming code authorized a mother to discipline and even kill her disobedient children, the law prioritized a birthmother’s privilege over that of social mothers, including the principal mother (*dimu*), the stepmother (*jimu*), and the adoptive mother (*yangmu*). I argue, the rationale behind this distinction was that a birthmother was always assumed to be loving (*ci*) and asked to behave like a strict father (*yanfu*), but mothers without the biological connection were assumed to be callous and careless and were asked to behave like loving mothers. In other words, during the Ming, a mother’s biological and social connection to the children determined not only the degree of violence she could use to discipline them but also of “masculine” and “feminine” performance she should conduct.

Schneewind Sarah (UC San Diego) *Scaling Parenthood*

Ming magistrates and prefects who attended to the livelihood of locals could win a name as “father-and-mother of the people.” I argue that this trope is best understood in the context of a wider repertoire of honors, and that that repertoire, in turn, may be understood through the concept of “incorporation” developed by political scientist Lily Tsai to explain differential living standards in present-day Chinese villages. Anecdotes also suggest that that locals’ honors and attempts to embed officials in the county found a real response in officials’ consciousness. How can we tell whether that was so, or the anecdotes were mere myth and locals’ attempts to embed officials in their counties were purely political and symbolic? From a humanistic perspective, some evidence about the emotional reality of being “the parent of the people” emerges in passages of texts that focus on the officials’ actual father-son relations.

Ha Yiming (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), *Resurrecting the Weisuo: Ming Military Policy during the Jingtai to Chenghua Reigns*

In the aftermath of the Tumu Crisis in 1449, the military organization of the Ming underwent a profound change. To replenish the depleted capital garrison and to address the shortcomings of the *weisuo*, the Ming court embarked on an empire-wide effort to conscript volunteers and recruit mercenaries. For this reason, many scholars consider 1449 as the end of the Early Ming. Yet the transition to a complete mercenary army would not be completed until the Jiajing reign (1521–1567) and during this transitional period, the overall structure of the Ming military did not change.

This paper will thus examine how the Ming state continued in its attempt to maintain the effectiveness of the *weisuo* in the post-Tumu period. By drawing on evidence from the *Ming shilu* as well as the memorials and writings of major officials during the Jingtai to Chenghua reigns, it aims to show that from the perspective of the state, the character of the *weisuo* continued to remain that of a fighting unit. In this regard, the organization of recruited mercenaries took place within the *weisuo* structure, the court continued to scrutinize military registers in an effort to track down deserters, and military auxiliaries were used to augment depleted manpower in both military garrisons and farms. Ultimately, this paper will argue that well into the late 15th century, the Ming court pursued an active empire-wide policy of returning to the *weisuo* system to its original condition.