‘The Wuding Editions’: Printing, Power, and Vernacular Fiction in the Ming Dynasty

Scott W. Gregory
University of Arizona
scottgregory@email.arizona.edu

Abstract

The vernacular fiction ‘novel’ is a genre typically associated with the explosion of commercial printing activity that occurred in the late sixteenth century. However, by that time, representative works such as the *Shuihu zhuan* and *Sanguo yanyi* had already been in print for several decades. Moreover, those early print editions were printed not by commercial entities but rather the elite of the Jiajing court. In order to better understand the genre as a print phenomenon, this paper explores the publishing output of one of those elites: Guo Xun (1475-1542), Marquis of Wuding. In addition to vernacular fiction, Guo printed a number of other types of books as well. This paper examines the entirety of his publishing activities in order to better contextualize the vernacular novel at this early stage in its life in print.

Keywords

Guo Xun (1475-1542), Ming dynasty, private printing, literature, vernacular fiction

Introduction

Guo Xun 郭勛 (1475-1541) was a military figure who moved among the elite circles around the Ming Jiajing court. He was the heir to a hereditary title, the Marquis of Wuding 武定, that had originally been bequeathed upon an ancestor by the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty for service in battle. He held several other prestigious titles and military positions, and was even a

personal confidant of the Jiajing emperor. [1] At the same time, he was also one of the first known publishers of Ming vernacular fiction 'novels', a genre more frequently associated with 'popular' entertainments and the marketplace than with the elite. He published early printed editions of the Ming 'masterworks', the *Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義 (*Romance of the three kingdoms*) and the *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (*The Water margin*). [2] He was also rumored to have been the hand behind a third, lesser-known novel, the *Yinglie zhuan* 英烈傳 (*Record of the heroes*), which retells the founding of the Ming dynasty in a vernacular-fiction style. Why would an elite figure such as Guo be involved in the publishing of this supposedly 'lowbrow' genre? In order to answer this question, this paper turns to the entirety of his publishing output.

Looking at Guo's publishing outside of vernacular fiction, it is evident that he used the publishing of other types of books for at least three purposes: he established the legitimacy of his social rank; he crafted an image of himself as a 'scholar-commander' (*Rujiang* 儒將), a military man equally at home in literati circles; and he hinted at his own engagement in literary endeavors. Though did not personally author the texts that he published, he shaped editions with these purposes in mind: they are reflected in the texts that he chose to disseminate, the paratexts that he packaged them with, and the books themselves as material objects or tokens of prestige. In this paper, I will first proceed chronologically to examine Guo's editions of works of genres other than vernacular fiction, including personal family histories, Tang literary collections, and *qu* lyric anthologies, in order to illustrate how he used publishing toward his desired ends. Then, I will turn to his involvement in printing vernacular fiction in order to contextualize it within his overall publishing activities. By doing so, we will have a clearer picture of the vernacular novel at this early stage in its life as a phenomenon of print.

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[1] A biographical sketch of Guo Xun is found in Goodrich and Fang, *Dictionary of Ming biography*, 770-3.

[2] On the filiation of the *Sanguo yanyi*, see Wei, *Sanguo yanyi banben kao*. On the *Shuihu zhuan* and its editions, Richard Irwin's *Evolution of a Chinese novel* (1953) remains useful, as does Irwin's follow-up article, '*Water margin* revisited' (1960). Some scholars have identified a fragment of a Jiajing-era *Shuihu* printing as the Guo edition; Ma Youyuan has argued against this view in his article 'Jiajing canben Shuihu zhuan fei Guo Wuding keben bian', collected in his *Shuihu erlun*.

Guo's editions of vernacular fiction are of critical importance for understanding of the genre, owing both to Guo's elite background and the early date at which they appeared. These features contrast sharply with the world in which vernacular fiction would come to flourish decades after Guo's death, that of commercial publishing at the turn of the seventeenth century centered in Jiangnan and Fujian. That is the milieu with which the genre is typically associated: that world of commercial print produced, for example, the earliest known edition of the *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*Journey to the west*), the 1592 Shide tang 世德堂 edition. *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅 (*Plum in the golden vase*), which had previously seen limited circulation in manuscript among the literary circles of Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568–1610), appeared in commercially printed form in 1618. And though *Shuihu zhuan* and *Sanguo yanyi* had already existed in print for decades by the turn of the seventeenth century, they too continued to be shaped into new incarnations at the hands of turn-of-the-century publishers: by 1594, the book market was so competitive that Yu Xiangdou 余象斗 felt compelled to claim in his edition of the *Shuihu zhuan* that his was the best among the dozen or so editions of the work for sale at the time. The *Sanguo yanyi* narrative was also adapted into a variety of new forms, such as simplified versions and military strategy manuals, to suit various readerships as well.[3] Later, commercial publishers also experimented with adding new features to these old works, such as commentaries attributed to renowned literary iconoclasts like Li Zhi 李贄 or Zhong Xing 鍾惺, in order to better meet the tastes of the market. Surely inspired by the commercial success of these masterworks, a flood of other works of fiction also appeared around the turn of the seventeenth century. The *San Sui pingyao zhuan* 三遂平妖傳 (*The three Sui quash the demons' revolt*), for example, was published around 1600, and extant copies show evidence of the involvement of the aforementioned Shide tang publishing house.[4] Yu Xiangdou also printed many more works of fiction in addition to the *Shuihu zhuan*, including *Nanyou ji* 南遊記 (*Journey to the south*) and *Beiyou ji* 北遊記 (*Journey to the north*),

[3] For a discussion of these various adaptations of the Three kingdoms narrative, see McLaren, 'Ming audiences'.
[4] On the dating and textual history of the *Pingyao zhuan*, see Hanan, 'The composition of the *P'ing yao chuan*', and Fusek, *The three Sui*, 176-9.

which are credited to himself, and the *Lieguo zhizhuan* 列國志傳 (*A Record of the states*), which is credited to his uncle, Yu Shaoyu 邵魚.[5]

This turn-of-the-century 'printing boom', which has become a major topic of study in recent years, carried the novel genre to wider audiences and imbued it with a popular-cultural resonance that persists to this day. Both the importance of this 'printing boom' and the very popularity of the major works of this novel genre have cast a long shadow over the 'pre-boom' print editions of Ming vernacular novels. The early academic study of the genre was intimately tied to the early twentieth-century search for a tradition of populist literature, as opposed to the supposedly elitist 'Classical Chinese'.[6] However, while these early scholars admired the vernacular novel form for its prose style and saw it as an important precursor to 'plain speech' writing, they remained troubled by the 'feudalistic' contents of most of these works. Well into the twentieth century, Chinese scholars expressed disappointment with the traditional Chinese novel, finding it lacking when compared with the European novel. Concurrently, and perhaps also inspired by such comparisons with the West, attempts were made to trace textual filiations and assign 'authors' to the mostly anonymous or pseudonymous works in the genre, and thereby recast them in the European novel mode. Later studies moved to counter such negative assessments by re-situating the traditional Chinese novel in the social and intellectual milieu of the late Ming and by reconstructing traditional reading practices through the examination of commentaries.

The printing world surrounding Guo Xun's editions of vernacular fiction has largely been lost amid the attention to the late-Ming commercial print industry on the one hand and the debates about the literary value of the vernacular fiction genre on the other. When such early editions have been mentioned, it has typically been in the context of a search for the 'original' or the 'author' of a given text. My aim here is not to elucidate the creative processes by which works of fiction were created, nor to attribute their authorship to any particular figure. Rather, I aim to highlight the various uses to which Guo Xun put print. The works he published can be roughly categorized into phases in which he concentrated on books of a particular type. I

[5] For a recent discussion of Yu Xiangdou and his publishing activities, see Lin Yaling, *Yu Xiangdou xiaoshuo pingdian*.
[6] For a discussion of the development of the categories of 'vernacular' and 'classical', see Shang, 'Writing and speech.'

juxtapose these phases with Guo's biographical details in order to trace the shifting purposes of his printing project. This investigation, as I will discuss below, has consequences for the understanding of the development of the vernacular fiction genre.

Ancestors, Allies, and Print

Guo Xun was born in 1475, by which time the transmission of the Wuding marquisate had already ceased. It had originally been bestowed upon his sixth-generation ancestor Guo Ying in 1384 by the founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang, for his service toward the founding of the dynasty. Ying had served first as a bodyguard and then as a military officer. After Ying's death in 1403, he was also posthumously granted the title Duke of Yingguo 營國公.

Between the time of its original bestowal upon Ying and its eventual inheritance by Guo Xun in 1508, the transmission of the Wuding marquisate was punctuated by disputes. These disputes were between two branches of the family, one descending from Ying's eldest son, Zhen, and the other descending from another son, Ming. Ming's daughter had become the favored consort of the Hongxi emperor, and the emperor granted the marquisate to the consort's brother. Zhen, however, had his own ties to the imperial family: he had married a daughter of Zhu Yuanzhang, the Yongjia 永嘉 princess, and the princess requested that their offspring be the heir of the marquisate. Yet when Ming's son passed away, Ming's grandson, Cong, contested the transfer of the marquisate to Zhen's branch. The court terminated the transmission of the marquisate altogether and gave equal ranks to each side as a concession. Later, the marquisate was revived when the next generation in the Zhen branch received it by imperial favor. Cong contested it again, this time unsuccessfully. Yet when the marquisate was to be passed down again, Cong contested it for the third time, saying that its inheritor was illegitimate. Once again, the transmission was brought to an end.[7]

That allegedly illegitimate descendant was Guo Liang 良 (1454-1507), Xun's father. Liang repeatedly petitioned for the marquisate, to the extent that he was even jailed for his insistence. Yet eventually, the Guo clan collectively sought to have the court determine the

[7] The troubled transmission of the Wuding marquisate is detailed in the biography of Guo Ying in *juan* 130 of the official dynastic history, the *Ming shi*.

marquisate's rightful heir once and for all. The court decided in Liang's favor in 1502 and the title was revived. By this time, Xun was already 27 years old and well into his adulthood. Just six years later, Liang passed away and Xun became the Marquis of Wuding. He was appointed to a series of military positions before being named Grand Defender (*zhenshou* 鎮守) of the Guangdong-Guangxi region in 1511.

This troubled history of the Wuding marquisate's transmission informed Guo's earliest known publications, which date from his time in the Guangdong-Guangxi region, from 1511 to 1517. The books he published in this period highlight his ancestral lineage and the legitimacy of his claim to the marquisate. As it had only been less than a generation since the marquisate was reinstated, Guo apparently used publishing in order to publicize his social status among his peers. He commissioned prefaces from prominent figures, which expressed admiration for Guo not only as an exemplary follower in the footsteps of his illustrious forebear, Guo Ying, but also as a refined man of culture.

The first of these publications concerning Guo's lineage is called *Sanjia shidian* 三家世典 (*Generational compendium of the three families*), and Guo Xun is credited as having compiled it himself. The 'three families' of the title refers to Guo's own along with those descended from Xu Da 徐達 (1332-1385) and Mu Ying 沐英 (1345-1392), two other military commanders under Zhu Yuanzhang at the founding of the Ming. The text gives short biographies of each of the three family patriarchs and lists their descendants. It also features three prefaces, all of which are dated 1515.[8]

The prefaces seek to place Guo Ying on the same level as Xu Da and Mu Ying, despite the fact that the latter pair were posthumously elevated to the rank of prince (*Zhongshan wang* 中山王 and *Qianning wang* 黔寧王, respectively), while Guo's own ancestor, Guo Ying, was posthumously given only the lower rank of duke. The Qing-era compilers of the *Siku quanshu* noted this disparity of rank. They also pointed out that the joint title of 'The three families' for the Guo, Mu, and Xu clans had not been in use since Ming times, and noted that the text merely reuses material that existed elsewhere—presumably the reason they did not include it in the

[8] The *Sanjia shidian* and its prefaces are found in the *Biji xiaoshuo daguan*, vol. 41.1, 123-30.

collection.[9] The prefaces to the *Sanjia shidian* seem to have anticipated such objections ahead of time, however, pointing out the rarity of a noble title from the founding of the dynasty being passed down to the current day. What brings the three families together, they assert, is not parity of rank but rather continuity of transmission. (The disputes into which the Wuding title fell are, of course, left unmentioned.) Furthermore, the prefaces single out Guo as the living embodiment of the virtues possessed by the three noble lineages that allowed them to survive for so long, and they commend Guo for putting the *Sanjia shidian* together when not occupied governing Guangdong and Guangxi.

The first preface is by the famed military figure and statesman, Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454-1530). The other two are by Zhou Nan 周南 and Chen Jin 陳金, Censors and military men who served with Guo Xun in the Guangdong-Guangxi region. Yang initiates the line of argument concerning rank in his preface, claiming that of all the noble ranks granted at the founding of the dynasty, only a very few had been transmitted to the current generation. Most of them, he writes, had ceased transmission when their holders had committed some offense, and it is a testament to the virtue of these three families that their ranks have persisted to the present generation. He also writes that although Xu, Mu, and Guo Ying were military commanders, they never took delight in killing, and that their descendants share their humaneness and wisdom. Yang ends the preface by describing how Guo had requested he write it and his reasoning for agreeing to do so:

> The Grand Guardian [Guo] wrote requesting a preface. I take it that the flourishing merits of these three gentlemen might be known to all and spoken of by all, but the humaneness abiding in their hearts and the wisdom of their conduct is perhaps not known in detail. For this reason, I specially wrote this in order to exhort their descendants to follow their family codes and preserve them for generations. The Grand Guardian possesses abilities and shrewdness in the manner of his ancestor, and the compilation of this compendium is sufficient to know they are preserved.
>
> 太保公書請序，予謂三公勳烈之盛，天下之人皆能知之、能言之，而其宅心之仁及人之惠或未及至詳也。故特著之以詔其後之人俾家法世守焉。太保公才略器概儼有祖風，是典之輯足知其所存矣。

[9] See the description in *Siku quanshu zongmu*, 553.

Guo's involvement with the creation of the book, Yang implies, is in itself proof of his virtue.

Zhou Nan's preface follows a rhetorical line similar to Yang Yiqing's. Zhou writes of the importance of worthy ministers to the endeavor of a leader, adding a flourish of classical allusions, and continues on to the particular case of the service of Xu Da, Mu Ying, and Guo Ying under Zhu Yuanzhang. Notably, he seems to be at pains to avoid showing an imbalance of rank between the three families. He elides Ying's title Duke of Yingguo 營國公 completely, ambiguously referring to him instead as 'Wuding Guo Ying 武定郭公英' and avoiding mention of the fact that the Wuding title was only a marquisate. Guo Xun is then referred to as the sixth-generation descendant of 'Wuding', again eliding the actual rank of that title. Zhou also avoids using Xu Da's princely title, using his lower ducal title instead.

Like Yang Yiqing, Zhou Nan also notes the rarity of the (allegedly) unbroken transmission of inherited titles from the founding of the dynasty to the present day and the virtues of the three families that are the subject of the text at hand, calling them cause for commemoration. Unlike Yang Yiqing, however, Zhou mentions his direct personal experience working with Guo Xun in Guangxi:

> In the *jiaxu* year of the Zhengde reign (1514), I humbly accepted the order to fill the position of Supreme Commander and was stationed in Cangwu, and Wuding's sixth-generation descendant and inheritor had already been governing that land with his great power and vision for two years. With his exceptional command, he issued orders to the people of the two areas (i.e., Guangdong and Guangxi), who conformed to them as if they were grass bending in the wind. When he was not occupied with military governance, he would collect the whole of the collective merits of the three dukes' military service to the emperor, put together their outlines, and classify them as the *Sanjia shidian*. He requested that I introduce it at the start. Who am I to dare to moisten my pen and fail to live up to my duty, especially when the merits of those who assisted the emperor in sweeping the area surpass previous generations such that their praises may be sung by the multitudes? Though the details of my account are no different from those of others, the merit of the three dukes' rising in the service of the True Lord in their day, and then their descendants inheriting their titles and living up to their glory—

this is something to commemorate, and is what makes these favored ones stand out from others. This is what I am unable to exhaust with words. Or could I make my admiration of this inheritor of rank known by submitting this? Accordingly, I pen this in response.

正德甲戌余承乏總督之命駐節蒼梧而武定之六世孫世臣巍然以位望隆重總戎斯土已二載。有奇威行令肅兩地之民夷，風靡草仆。不暇戎政之餘時多以三公同功一体取三公從聖祖戎馬中履歷本末，撮其大要，類為三家世典，属余引其端，余何人斯而敢泚是筆以辱來命，况聖祖掃清區宇扶植人極之功絕出前代萬萬人人類能讚頌，余雖縷言之固當無異於人也，但三公當真主龍興之日建開國輔成之功且後嗣又皆恪守前規光增舊物，斯則可慶而幸者獨異於人而余自不容已於言也。抑世臣是舉又能知所好尚者乎。因書以歸之。

In the third preface, Chen Jin also begins by celebrating the merits of the three ancestors who came together to assist the first emperor of the Ming in the 'washing away of the stench of [Yuan Mongol] mutton and the establishment of a great peace of ten thousand generations' 滌腥羶以清宇宙而為萬世開太平也. Like the other preface writers, he too remarks upon the rarity of the transmission of noble titles over more than one hundred years, pointing out that of six dukes and eighteen marquises, the three families are all that remain. Like Zhou Nan, he elides the distinctions between the three ancestors' ranks as princes and the marquisate to which Guo Xun was the heir, placing the marquisate 'Wuding' where the dukedom 'Yingguo' should be in reference to Guo Ying, despite the fact that he uses the ducal titles of Weiguo and Qianguo for Xu and Mu, respectively. Where Chen is unique, however, is that he mentions knowing all three of the direct ancestors of Xu, Mu, and Guo. He met Xu Da's fifth-generation descendant while serving as Minister of Revenue in Nanjing, Mu Ying's sixth-generation ancestor while serving as Grand Coordinator in Yunnan, which the Mu family had controlled since Ying's time, and Guo Xun while serving as Supreme Commander in Guangdong and Guangxi. Chen writes that he agreed to write a preface as a testament to the virtue and filial piety of all three descendants and Guo Xun in particular.

The following year, Guo printed a collection of documents related to his family history titled *Yuqing xunyi ji* 毓慶勳懿集 (*A collection nurturing and celebrating meritorious service*). Though its prefaces are dated 1516, Xun's father Liang is credited with 'respectfully collating and recording' (*dunshou jilu* 頓首輯錄) the documents and Xun himself is credited with publishing (*kanxing* 刊行) the collection. The 'collator' of the *Yuqing xunyi ji*, Guo Liang, had been dead for nine years by the time the collection was published by his son Xun in 1516. According to the prefaces, Xun added to the previously existing collection and had it printed.[10]

The documents in the collection support the view that they were compiled as evidence for Liang and Xun's claim to the marquisate: they do not cover the periods in which the marquisate first fell into dispute, and they trace the line of inheritance of the Wuding marquisate through Liang's father. The 1516 printed edition also includes documentation of Guo Xun's inheritance of the Marquis of Wuding title.

The 1516 prefaces are by Fei Hong 費宏 (1468-1535), Wang Zan 王瓚, and Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466-1560). Fei Hong begins his preface by explaining that Guo Xun's father Liang had put the collection together. He then describes the contents of the collection, listing the types of documents contained within its pages and remarking that they show the close relationship between the Guo clan and the imperial lineage. He then explains the circumstances behind its publication as a woodblock imprint:

> For the three years that the current marquis, the Grand Guardian and official of the age, has been invested with imperial authority to serve as Grand Defender of Guangdong and Guangxi, he has remained mindful that his ancestors' legacy was not to be lost. Thus, when he was not occupied with military duties, he collated the text and had it printed. Then he sent a servant to seek a preface.
> 嗣侯太保公世臣以節鉞鎮兩廣之三年念先人之手澤不可以失墜也。乃於戎務之暇讎而梓之，復專使來徵予序。

Fei Hong then enumerates the marquises, earls, and other titles conferred upon members of the Guo clan in detail before returning to the subject of Guo Xun and his father, the filial

[10] A microfilm copy of the *Yuqing xunyi ji* is held by the East Asian Library, Princeton University.

descendants who are 'scholar-commanders' (*Rujiang* 儒將) well-versed in martial and civil affairs:

> I have caught glimpses of how Guo's clan came to be known and supported by the emperor early on. Their glory and honor have been passed down, their prestige detailed in these documents, their imperial favor expansive as the clouds. Those who maintain this state must be faithful and persistent and have roots fostered by filiality, friendship, humaneness, forgiveness, respect, modesty, sincerity, restraint, and substance. As for being fond of the sages and delighting in scholars, holding poetry and books in esteem, and loving rites and music, these qualities are all qualities that are nurtured through literary virtue and not exclusively accumulated through martial accomplishments. How could the work Shizhu [i.e. Guo Liang] put into compiling this collection be but mere embellishment? It describes the events of the past, transmits them to the inheritors, causes generations to maintain their standards and people to emulate them. Those who know the virtue and effort of the nation so fully should be afforded the description 'loyal'. Those who know how the efforts of the ancestors shine upon those who have followed them should be afforded the description 'filial'. Those who know that literary affairs and martial preparations are of necessity dependent on one another should be admired as a Scholar-Commander, and as one whose set of talents is complete. Such a person can assist the court with strategies in order to ensure eternal peace. The Grand Guardian is in his prime, with talent and stature.
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> 子竊窺郭氏之先所以早結主知特荷，休寵垂，聲光於竹帛委，慶澤於雲，仍者惟其忠貞之篤有以致之，而孝友仁恕恭儉誠恪實濬發培植之本。至於好賢、樂士、敦詩書、悅禮樂，則兼資乎文德而不專尚乎武功也。實竹公之為是集亦豈徒務為斧藻而已哉？紹述前聞，傳之後嗣俾世守而人習之，知國家之褒德選勞如是其厚則必圖報稱之忠，知祖考之劬躬燾後如是其勤則必思嗣續之孝，知文事武備之相須而不可一缺則必慕為儒將、為全才而期仰贊廟謨以永保乎太平之業，太保公春秋鼎盛才望傑。

After Fei Hong's preface is one written by Wang Zan, which follows along very similar lines. He declares that the collection was first put together by Guo Liang and then expanded and printed by Xun, and he enumerates the ranks of members of the Guo clan. He also remarks upon the relative rarity of a rank being passed down from the beginning of the dynasty to the present day, and here he notes that Guo had already compiled the *Sanjia shidian* in commemoration of this fact.

Zhan Ruoshui's preface, however, differs from the other two in that it takes the merit of Guo Xun as its focus. He explains the meaning of the work in terms of its title, creatively interpreting the first two characters, *yuqing*, as referring to Guo Xun's family and its second two, *xunyi*, as Guo's ancestors. He goes on to say that the 'collection' of the title refers to eight collected praiseworthy merits (*ba yi* 八懿). These are: humaneness toward others, filiality, respect for family, reverence toward ancestors, veneration of one's ruler, maintaining proper family relations, recognizing worthies, and managing political affairs. Zhan places these in a chain, reminiscent of that of the *Great learning*, with each step being a prerequisite for the one that follows. Guo Xun, Zhan claims, has brought this chain of merits to realization and is therefore a credit to both his family lineage and the dynasty.

'A Military Man Who Loves Literature'

Soon after publishing the works highlighting his ancestral lineage, Guo shifted his attention to bolstering his reputation as a literary connoisseur. He published three collections of Tang poetry and prose, two of which date to his tenure in Guangdong-Guangxi, and one after he was recalled to the capital. These were *Yuan Cishan wenji* 元次山文集 (*A literary anthology of Yuan Jie*) and *Bai Xiangshan shiji* 白香山詩集 (*A poetry anthology of Bai Juyi*), both dated 1517, and *Bai Letian wenji* 白樂天文集 (*A literary anthology of Bai Juyi*), dated 1519. The edition of the prose writings of Yuan Jie, which is still extant, is another illustration of Guo's use of publishing as a channel for publicizing his character and social connections. Like the *Yuqing xunyi ji*, it features another preface written by Zhan Ruoshui, who was in mourning for his mother in Xiqiao 西樵, Guangdong at the time. In his preface, Zhan again praises Guo's taste and abilities, and mentions that he had given his copy of Yuan Jie's writings to Guo. It reads:

The historian Ruoshui says: since I obtained the writings of Yuan Jie, my contemplations on literary patterning (*wen*) began to take consideration of the ancient. In great antiquity, there was only substance unembellished by patterning. Then there came substance embellished by patterning, and then there came 'substance' floating atop the surface of patterning. When substance floats atop the surface of patterning, the Way is in ruins. This is the reason why, when Lin Fang asked what is basic in ritual, Confucius treated it as a great question that got at the birth of things. First there is substance, and then comes patterning. Accordingly, substance is that which is born of heaven, and patterning is that which is born of men. Substance is innate and is brought about through creation. Patterning is acquired and is brought about through transmission. This is why, concerning our literary heritage, people have difficulty not with patterning but with substance, not with ornateness but with roughhewn simplicity, not with cleverness but with straightforward unpretentiousness. While traveling in the northern capital, I attained a copy of Master Yuan's writings and was struck by it. I desired substance rather than wildness, simplicity rather than ugliness, unpretentiousness rather than obstinacy. Stately and self-fashioned was his style. The greats of the Tang were a civilizing force in the world that has persisted since middle antiquity. For these writings to become obscure and not circulate would be to allow our heritage to come to an end in this generation.

The Grand Defender of Guangdong and Guangxi region, Guo Xun, the Marquis Wuding, is a military man who loves literature. I described the writings of Master Yuan to him, and when he read them, it was as if he had some tacit understanding of them. He said, 'Ah, Yuan Jie was unyielding and bold, indignant at the strife and deviance of his times. If only we had hundreds of Yuan Jies to sweep away the customs of this era! Is there merely patterning now?' He then printed an edition based on my copy and employed me to relate his vision of it.
史若水曰：自吾得元子而文思益古，夫太上有質而無文，其次有質而有文，其次文浮其質，文浮其質道之敝也，故林放問禮之本，孔子大之物之生也，先質而後文，故質也者生乎天者也，文也者生乎人者也，質也者先天而作者

也，文也者後天而述者也。故人之於斯文也，不難於文而難於質，不難於華而難於朴，不難於巧而難於拙。余自北遊觀藝於燕冀之都，得元子而異焉，欲質不欲野，欲朴不欲陋，欲拙不欲固，卓然自成，其家者也。唐之大家，風斯下矣，其駸駸乎中古而不已矣乎！其泯而不傳，將文末之世爾矣乎！兩廣總戎武定侯郭公，武而好文，余遺之元子。公讀之，若有契焉，曰：「嗟嗟次山，浩然剛大，憤世疾邪者也。安得百十次山以噴俗爾！獨文乎哉？」遂以余本次而刻之，俾余敘其說云爾。[11]

As Zhan Ruoshui remarks in the preface, Yuan Jie (719-792) had a literary reputation as a moralist who openly critiqued what he saw as the corruption of his times. In his most well-known essay, *Gailun* 丐論 (*On begging*), which is included in the anthology printed by Guo, Yuan Jie compares a beggar acquaintance favorably with officials who engage in 'begging' of another, less honest kind. Also included is Yuan's preface to his own *Qiezhong ji* 箧中集 (*An anthology from a box*), in which Yuan collected works by 'friends on the periphery of official life'.[12] In that preface, Yuan praises the authenticity of the moral engagement of those poets, which he sees as being in contrast with the artificiality of strict adherence to compositional rules and standards.[13] Zhan borrows upon this moral image in order to make associations with Guo.

The collection of Bai Juyi's poetry features a preface by Chen Jin, who had contributed one to the *Sanjia shidian* as well. Chen Jin's preface to the poetry collection is dated the *dingchou* 丁丑 day of the twelfth year of the Zhengde reign (January 22, 1517). It explains that Guo received the Bai Juyi collections from one 'Principal Gentleman Shi' (*zhenglang Shi jun* 正郎石君) and then re-edited them.[14]

[11] *Tang Cishan wenji xu*, Sibu congkan edition.
[12] McMullen, 'Yuan Chieh,' in Nienhauser, ed. *Indiana companion*, 952.
[13] On Yuan Jie, see also Owen, 'The Cultural Tang (650-1020),' in Chang and Owen, eds. *The Cambridge history of Chinese literature*, vol. 1, 315.
[14] The precise meaning of the title *zhenglang* is unclear here. I translate it here as 'Principal Gentleman' after Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles*, 124. Hucker's definition is in reference to a Song-era term; presumably, its use here is a stylistic archaism.

Guo Xun's appointment in the Guangdong-Guangxi region came to an end in the eighth month of the twelfth year of the Zhengde reign (1517), when he was recalled to Beijing in order to take up a position as commander of training the Division of the Three Thousand. He was also jointly appointed Commissioner-in-Chief of the Left Chief Military Commission, a 1a rank.[15] It was only then that he published the collection of Bai Juyi's prose. The prose collection features a preface, dated the *jimao* 己卯 day of the tenth month of the fourteenth year of the Zhengde reign (November 10, 1519), by Wang Zan, who had also contributed a preface to Guo's *Yuqing xunyi ji* collection of family documents. According to Wang's preface to the prose collection, Guo's father Liang had owned a rare edition of the prose collection and Xun had it reprinted for distribution to court officials. Wang writes:

> My friend, the Grand Guardian Guo, the Marquis of Wuding, had already printed and circulated Bai Juyi's poems. In order to respond to the desires of the officers of the court to review them together with his prose, Guo had a fine edition held by his father Shizhu [Liang] reprinted and asked me to write this preface.
> 吾友太保武定侯郭君世臣既梓其詩行於世間，以朝士大夫應欲並觀其文，遂取先實竹公所藏善本復刻之，屬余為序。[16]

No mention is made of the 'Principal Gentleman Shi' named in the poetry collection's preface as the source of the Bai Juyi editions, suggesting that Guo's story changed in order to better characterize himself as a well-bred, cultured participant in the world of letters once back in the capital.[17] It is apparent that Guo either traded books with 'officers of the court' or wished to project the image of doing so.

Rhyme and Leisure in the Capital

After the publication of the Bai Juyi prose collection in the capital, Guo moved away from Tang literary works with prefaces painting him as a connoisseur of literature. He now portrayed

[15] See Hucker, *Dictionary, '*wu-chün tu-tu fu' entry, 569-70.
[16] The preface is excerpted in Xie Siwei, *Bai Juyi ji zonglun*, 126. Xie also includes a description of Chen Jin's preface. I have so far been unable to access the rare editions of these works.
[17] Xie, 125-7.

himself as an active participant in literary creation by publishing a philological work called the *Shiyun shiyi* 詩韻釋義 (*Rhymes of poetry, explicated*). This is a rhyming dictionary, with 10,260 words organized into 106 rhyme categories, each with a definition typically six or fewer characters in length. Its original compilation is credited to 'The Old Man of the Snowy Cliffs East of the River' (*Jiangdong xueya laoren* 江東雪厓老人), and the definitions are credited to one Guanxi Xiuranzi 關西修髯子. The dictionary also features a preface by Yang Yiying 楊一渶 dated 1520.[18]

Yang Yiying uses the preface to tie together Guo's lineage, his degree of culture, and his involvement in publishing. He mentions Guo's previous publishing activity, namely the *Sanjia shidian* family history and Guo edition of Bai Juyi's poetry collection. Yang remarks that Guo followed these with the current publication, which is intended to aid in the composition of poetry, and ends with a testimony to Guo's character:

> When the carving of this book's blocks was near completion, Guo came to me and requested that I write a preface for it. I respect Guo's interests, and admire his refined literary taste, so I could not refuse. Accordingly, I say that though the descendants of Guo's ancestor, a top-ranking officer from Fengyang at the founding of the dynasty, are of inherited rank, they have placed emphasis on literature in the same manner as scholar-officials. For this reason, there has been much of record at court. Since Xun has inherited the rank, he has administered according to principle, and shows much of his ancestor's manner.
> 刻將緒，公走告余，曰：詩韻釋義君其為我序之。余既重公之好，尚愛其文雅，義不獲辭，遂為之言，公先鳳陽人，國初元勳，家歷世以來，雖官勳階而注意文墨與儒家臣同，故立朝多可紀，比公承爵立政為理，恪有祖風事。[19]

Thus, Yang's preface assists Guo in constructing an image of a literate military man in a long, refined lineage.

[18] This edition is held in the National Library in Beijing and is listed in *Zhongguo guji shanben shumu*, vol. 1, 185.
[19] Preface from the edition held by the National Library of China.

In 1522, Guo was placed in charge of the Integrated Divisions that guard the capital region. In the previous two decades, Guo and his father had won back the Wuding marquisate. Guo had already advanced through a series of military positions and been awarded the ceremonial title of Grand Guardian, another high rank. Yet it was at this point in his life that his rise to power truly began. This was the first year of the reign of the Jiajing emperor, who was brought in to succeed the heirless Zhengde emperor. The newly installed emperor, who was a nephew of the Hongzhi emperor, rebelled against the idea that he be posthumously adopted into the direct imperial lineage. Rather, he desired to have his biological father posthumously named an emperor and installed in the imperial ancestral hall. The ensuing events, which came to be known as the Great Rites Controversy, embroiled officialdom.[20]

In the controversy, Guo Xun was an early and steadfast supporter of the new emperor. For his support, Guo won the lasting friendship of the emperor and, at the same time, the enmity of many officials. The remaining twenty years of his life would be punctuated by a series of scandals and official accusations, from which Guo's fellow supporters from the Great Rites Controversy and the emperor himself would protect him. The first such scandal was the case of Li Fuda 李福達, an alleged magician and rebel whose son was in Guo's employ.[21] When charges were drawn up against Li Fuda in 1526, Guo spoke out on his behalf and attempted to have him cleared. The censors in charge of the case refused to do so, and instead charged Guo as Li's accomplice. The emperor reviewed the case in the following year, siding with Guo and turning the tables on Guo's accusers. His allies used the opportunity to purge their enemies from office. Nonetheless, Guo was impeached again in 1529 on a number of charges, including graft and cruelty to an officer, and was removed from the Integrated Divisions. He proved his resiliency once again and was reinstated with the Integrated Divisions just two years later.

The year of his reinstatement, 1531, also saw his publication of the *Yongxi yuefu* 雍熙樂府 (*Ballads of harmonious peace*), a collection of *qu* 曲 songs that Guo is credited with

[20] On the Great Rites Controversy and an overview of the ritual precedents involved, see Fisher, *Chosen one.*

[21] For an account of the Li Fuda affair and its aftermath, see ter Haar, *White Lotus*, 155-66. In the Qianlong era of the Qing dynasty, a fictionalization of the Li Fuda case appeared in the collection *Yumu xingxin bian* 娛目醒心編 (*Stories to delight the eye and awaken the heart*).

compiling himself.[22] The *Yongxi yuefu* is considered one of the three most important *qu* anthologies, alongside the *Shengshi xinsheng* 盛世新聲 and the *Cilin zhaiyan* 詞林摘艷. It is also notable for containing all the arias from the *Xixiang ji* (西廂記 *Record of the western chamber*).[23] Guo's edition of the *Yongxi yuefu* contains a preface signed Wang Yan 王言, the 'Retired official of the Vernal Springs (春泉居士).' Wang Yan states that Guo compiled the *Yongxi yuefu* collection in his hours of leisure, and had it printed so that its art songs might circulate more widely. Yet he notes that it takes a certain taste to understand the richness of the works:

> He showed them to me in his free time, and when I read them it was as if I were sitting in the court of the sagely Shun of great antiquity: the five tones played in harmony and the six modes resounded together, flooding the ears. It was as if I had entered the imperial kitchen: all delicacies of land and sea arrayed, with every flavor on offer. The only concern is that such a feast would not suit the tastes of the masses, that such refined sounds would not be melodious to the common ear. Likes and dislikes differ, and these are not things that are understood by the unsophisticated.
>
> 閒以示余，余讀之如坐虞廷，五音並奏、六律齊鳴，洋洋乎盈耳;如入御廚，水陸畢陳、調和大備，第恐大羹之味，或不適於眾口，希聲之樂，或不諧於俗耳，好惡不同，固非謬陋之所知也。[24]

Wang describes the collected works and their compilation as a sign of a peaceful era, and explains the title as signifying as much. He then associates this peaceful era with good governance, and good governance with Guo Xun, writing:

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[22] An exemplar of this edition is held at the National Central Library, Taipei. It should be noted that the *Yongxi yuefu* is frequently incorrectly dated to 1566; that is the date of a later edition that was included in the *Sibu congkan* and is therefore most widely available.

[23] The texts of these arias are identical to the versions in the earliest printed edition of the *Xixiang ji*, the 'Hongzhi edition' of 1498. As the Hongzhi edition was only rediscovered in the 1940s, the *Yongxi yuefu* was an important source in the study of the *Xixiang ji*. See West and Idema, *The moon and the zither*, 12-18.

[24] This preface is taken from the edition held in the National Central Library, Taipei.

> From these recitations of the people transmitted through the homes in the streets and alleys, all may see the rule of harmonious peace is not a thing of the reigns of Yao and Shun, but of the present! Moreover, when sir, who is among the senior officials of the country and has the trust of our enlightened ruler, is retiring at leisure, he must have compositions of all modes that extravagantly lay out meritorious governance in order to proclaim the flourishing peace of the land.
> 自是閭閻里巷家傳而人誦者，咸以見雍熙之治不在唐虞而在今日矣!況公為國元勳，受知明主，退食之暇，必有移宮換羽製作，鋪張治功，以鳴國家太平之盛。

In the following years, Guo Xun's alliance with the Jiajing emperor, noted in Wang Yan's preface, strengthened even further. In 1533, he began to represent the emperor at sacrificial functions, and in 1539, he was awarded the title of Duke of Yiguo 翊國公. At that time, he was concurrently given the title of Grand Preceptor (*taishi* 太師) and given a substantial raise in pay. He also traveled with the imperial entourage to Huguang.

In 1540, he introduced another magician, Duan Chaoyong 段朝用, to the emperor. Duan claimed to be able to make eating utensils that would grant the user immortality. For introducing Duan, the emperor granted Guo yet another raise in pay. When Duan was exposed as a fraud, the ensuing controversy enveloped Guo as well. A flurry of charges was leveled at Guo, and this time he could not escape. He was jailed in the ninth month of 1541, and died in prison the following year. The cultured image he had attempted to cultivate with his publishing was not enough to save him.

Vernacular Fiction in the World of the Elite

In addition to the works discussed above, Guo's name is also associated with three works of vernacular fiction, which have been excluded from the chronological account above due to uncertainty of their dating. He is known to have printed early editions of both the *Shuihu zhuan*

and the *Sanguo yanyi*, and he was rumored to have had the *Yinglie zhuan* assembled. The association with the former two novels comes from several sources. First, 'Wuding editions' 武定板 of both are listed in the Baowen tang 寶文堂 bibliographic catalogue of the Ming collector Chao Li 晁瑮.[25] Second, the preface to a Wanli-era edition of the *Shuihu zhuan* claims that its text is a reconstruction of Guo Xun's Jiajing-era edition, which was purportedly superior to other editions then circulating. That preface, signed 'Tiandu waichen' 天都外臣 and dated 1589, laments the poor quality of recent editions of the *Shuihu zhuan*, the texts of which have been ruined by poor editing and the addition of spurious material by unnamed 'village pedants'.[26] Third, the *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (*Gleanings from the Wanli era*), by the late-Ming gossip Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578-1642), says that a contemporary fine edition of the *Shuihu zhuan* circulating in Xin'an is based on an edition 'transmitted by his [Guo Xun's] family' 其家所傳.[27] This is assumed to be in reference to the edition with the preface by 'Tiandu waichen'.

No exemplars of Guo's *Sanguo yanyi* or *Shuihu zhuan* have been identified. However, there is an edition of the *Sanguo yanyi* that is commonly believed to have been printed by the Ming's highest oversight body, the Censorate (*Ducha yuan* 都察院) that could very well actually be Guo's. The edition contains a preface signed Xiuranzi, the very same name that is credited with writing the explications in Guo's *Shiyun shiyi* rhyme manual. The name Xiuranzi does not appear anywhere outside these two books, which suggests that this was a pen name of someone in Guo's employ. The chronology of their appearances also matches Guo's circumstances. The rhyme manual is dated 1520, and the Xiuranzi preface to the *Sanguo yanyi* is dated the summer of the *renwu* 壬午 year of the Jiajing reign, or 1522. This period falls just after Guo's return to the capital and around the time of his appointment to the Integrated Divisions.

The 1522 edition of the *Sanguo yanyi* is also important in that it is generally believed to be the earliest printed edition of that novel, owing to remarks in the Xiuranzi preface. While the preface itself does not describe the circumstances of its printing or name its printer, it does suggest that the edition's creator was conscious of the rarity and fineness of his particular edition. A rhetorical interlocutor asks, 'There is a flood of simple books, while fine editions are

[25] Chao Li, *Baowen tang shumu* (1957 reprint edition), 108-9.
[26] Reprinted in Zhu, *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 187-90.
[27] Shen, *Wanli*, *juan* 5, 139-40.

extremely rare. Might we bestow longevity upon the woodblock carvers and spread this edition out to all four directions?' 簡帙浩瀚，善本甚艱，請壽諸梓，公之四方，可乎 [28] If the 1522 edition and the Wuding edition are actually one and the same, that would mean that Guo may have been the first to print the *Sanguo yanyi.*

As for the *Shuihu zhuan*, there is no such extant candidate for consideration as a Wuding edition. However, there are suggestions that officials in Guo's extended circles were reading it around the same time as the *Sanguo yanyi* described above was in circulation. The playwright and *qu* lyric writer Li Kaixian 李開先 (1502-1568), who passed the palace examination in 1529, writes of the admiration for *Shuihu zhuan* among his renowned literary acquaintances:

> Cui Houji (Xian, 1478-1541), Xiong Nansha (Guo, js. 1529), Tang Jingchuan (Shunzhi, 1507-1560), Wang Zunyan (Shenzhong, 1509-1559)), and Chen Hougang (Shu) say that the *Shuihu zhuan* is filled with minute details and numerous veins that link up, and that only the *Records of the Grand Historian* surpasses this book. Moreover, since ancient times there has never before been a book about a single event in one hundred and twenty volumes (*ce*). Anybody who would fault it for its treacherous banditry and deception knows nothing of methods for narrating events or of the subtleties of the study of history.
> 崔後渠、熊南沙、唐荊川、王遵嚴、陳後岡謂《水滸傳》委曲詳盡，血脈貫通，《史記》而下，便是此書。且古來更未有一事而二十冊者。倘以奸盜詐偽病之，不知序事之法，學史之妙者也。[29]

With the exception of Cui Xian, the men whom Li Kaixian names here were fellow members of a circle that later came to be called the Eight Talents of the Jiajing Era. Cui Xian, on the other hand, was twelve years older than Li and associated with the circle that came to be known as the Former Seven Masters. These circles of readers of the *Shuihu zhuan* connect with Guo Xun, the publisher of the edition, through the well-known official and thinker Wang Tingxiang 王廷相 (1474-1544). Wang Tingxiang, a member of the Former Seven Masters, knew both Cui Xian and Li Kaixian. He also worked closely with Guo Xun as they were the civilian and military

[28] In the 1975 *Sanguo zhi tongsu yanyi* facsimile reprint edition: translation mine.
[29] Quoted in Zhu, *Shuihu zhuan ziliao huibian*, 167: translation mine.

directors, respectively, of the Integrated Divisions. Wang began that appointment in 1534, just a few years after Li Kaixian entered officialdom, and held it concurrently with his position as Censor-in-Chief. Later, from his exile, Li Kaixian would write a series of sixty poems about officials he had known and most admired in the course of his career. Wang Tingxiang numbered among them.[30]

The *Shuihu zhuan* in twenty volumes read in Li Kaixian's circles was most likely the one printed by Guo; the only other known possibility for their time frame was an edition printed by the Censorate, as recorded in the *Gujin shuke* 古今書刻 (*Imprints old and new*) catalogue compiled sometime by the Longqing era (1567-1572).[31] There is also the intriguing possibility that the Censorate edition and Guo's edition were one and the same: a number of the Censorate's publications were books also printed by Guo, including the *Sanguo yanyi*, as mentioned above. Some of the Censorate publications are even directly related to Guo, such as his family document collection *Yuqing xunyi ji* and his art-song anthology *Yongxi yuefu*. This, along with the fact mentioned above that Guo worked with the Censor-in-Chief Wang Tingxiang, suggests some level of coordination between them in their printing activities. Perhaps Guo had his friend Wang Tingxiang use his official agency to print on his behalf, or perhaps the Censorate borrowed Guo's woodblocks. Even if Guo and the Censorate were conducting their printing projects independently, the titles they had in common show that they had similar target audiences in mind.

In addition to his involvement with early editions of the *Shuihu zhuan* and the *Sanguo yanyi* discussed above, Guo was also rumored to have played a role in the creation of the *Yinglie zhuan*. Late Ming writers allege that Guo had it made as part of a plot to bring glory to his ancestral lineage and win a promotion in rank. The novel is a vernacular retelling of the founding of the Ming dynasty, and features Guo's ancestor Ying as a character. Its narrative follows the life of the dynastic founder, Zhu Yuanzhang, who is referred to anachronistically as Taizu 太祖 throughout, and ends in the sixteenth year of the Hongwu reign with the pacification of Yunnan

[30] The set of poems, 'Liushi zi' 六十子, is reproduced in *Li Kaixian ji*, 223.
[31] Reprinted in Feng and Li, *Mingdai shumu tiba congkan.*

and the complete integration of the Ming's territory.[32] An array of historiographical materials is incorporated into the text.[33]

The first to make such an allegation about Guo's involvement in this novel's creation was a younger contemporary, Zheng Xiao 鄭曉 (1499-1566). In his *Jinyan* 今言 (*Words on the present*), Zheng wrote that Guo used the publishing of vernacular fiction as part of a scheme to win prestige for his family lineage:

> In the sixteenth year of the Jiajing era, Guo Xun sought to have his ancestor, Ying the Marquis of Wuding, installed in the imperial hall. Accordingly, he made the *Yinglie zhuan* of the current dynasty in imitation of the vernacular version of the *Sanguo zhi* and the *Shuihu zhuan*. It says that both the live capture of [Zhang] Shicheng and the shooting of [Chen] Youliang were the work of Ying. It was read in the emperor's quarters and moved those who heard it.
> 嘉靖十六年，郭勛欲進祀其立功之祖武定侯英於太廟，乃仿《三國志》俗說及《水滸傳》為國朝《英烈記》。言生擒士誠，射死友諒，皆英之功。傳說宮禁，動人聽聞。[34]

Several decades later, Shen Defu repeated this charge in his *Wanli yehuo bian*. Shen Defu's version of the allegation appears to be an elaboration on Zheng's earlier one, following the same general outline but adding scandalous details. It reads:

> At the outset, Xun had aligned himself with Zhang [Cong, of] Yongjia in deliberations on the matter of the Great Rites. Because of this, they relied on and assisted one another, and came into favor with the emperor. Guo plotted to have his hereditary rank raised to duke and came up with a marvelous plan. He personally wrote a vernacular record of the founding of the dynasty and titled it *Yinglie zhuan*. In it, he praises his clan founder Ying's achievements in battle, placing him almost on the level of [Chang Yuchun, Prince of] Kaiping and [Xu

[32] For a complete synopsis, see *Yinglie zhuan* entry in Ouyang and Xiao, *Zhonggguo tongsu xiaoshuo zongmu tiyao*, 53-5.
[33] For a detailed tracing of historical sources employed in the *Yinglie zhuan*, see Zhao, 'Yinglie zhuan benshi kaozheng'.
[34] Zheng Xiao, *Jinyan*, *juan* 1 no. 92, p. 49.

> Da, Prince of] Zhongshan. Also, at the time no one knew whose was the stray arrow that struck and killed Chen Youliang during the battle of Poyang, so Xun said Guo Ying fired it. Xun had the officials of the inner court charged with storytelling perform it for the emperor daily and to pronounce it an old edition that had been passed down. Thinking it was a pity that Ying's reward was not commensurate with his achievements, the emperor sought to elevate Ying in rank.... Next, Guo used his merits in construction to be made Grand Preceptor, and then he was promoted as Duke of Yiguo. Thus, falsifying a biography brought him power. This vernacular book is currently in circulation.
> 初，勛以附會張永嘉議大禮，因相倚互為援，驟得上寵，謀進爵上公，乃出奇計，自撰開國通俗紀傳名《英烈傳》者。內稱其始祖郭英戰功，幾埒開平、中山，而鄱陽之戰，陳友諒中流矢死，當時本不知何人，乃云郭英所射，令內官之職平話者日唱演於上前，且謂此相傳舊本。上因惜英功大賞薄，有意崇進之，會勛人直[。。。]遂用工程功竣拜太師，後又加翊國公世襲，則偽造紀傳，與有力焉。此通俗書今傳播於世。[35]

No copy of an *Yinglie zhuan* printed by Guo survives; the earliest exemplar of the novel is an edition published in 1591 by a Nanjing commercial publisher named Yang Mingfeng 楊明峰. This is the only known publication by that publisher.[36] The edition, which bears the modified title *Huang Ming kaiyun Yingwu zhuan* 皇明開運英武傳 (*The record of the heroic and martial founding of the august Ming*), makes reference in interlinear notes to an 'old edition' 舊本 supposedly printed by the House of Qi 齊府 principality.[37] This edition differs in both structure and content from later editions, such as a 1616 edition that claims to have been revised by Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593).

[35] Shen Defu, *Wanli yehuo bian*, vol. 1, 139-40.
[36] See Han, *Xiaoshuo shufang lu*, 5.
[37] The Qi principality had actually been abolished in the Yongle era, nearly two centuries previously. It is highly unlikely that there was a Yongle-era *Yinglie zhuan*, suggesting that Yang's edition was based on Guo's, and Guo had forged his edition to appear to be older than it was.

Without an exemplar of a Guo edition of the *Yinglie zhuan* available, it is impossible to prove with certainty these allegations of his involvement in its creation. However, in light of Guo's involvement in—and strategic use of—printing, the allegations are quite plausible. Moreover, in Guo's time, vernacular fiction had yet to take on the connotations it would have in Shen Defu's time, so Guo's involvement in its printing would not have been scandalous in and of itself. Also, as the charges have it, the *Yinglie zhuan* does borrow heavily from its more celebrated cousins: it is written in a prose style reminiscent of the *Shuihu zhuan* and the *Sanguo yanyi*, and shares both characterizations and plot points with those works as well. Most importantly, however, it glorifies Guo Xun's ancestor Guo Ying in one scene through the use of elements borrowed from the *Sanguo yanyi*. The scene is one in which Taizu battles his arch-rival Chen Youliang 陳友諒 on Poyang Lake 鄱陽湖. In it, explicit comparisons are drawn between Taizu's chief adviser, Liu Ji 劉基, and Zhuge Liang of *Sanguo yanyi* fame.[38] Like Zhuge Liang, Liu Ji manipulates the winds from atop a specially-constructed platform and creates the right conditions for a fire attack on the enemy's boats. After the attack's success, Taizu pronounces Liu a reincarnation of Zhuge Liang. The 1591 edition of the *Yinglie zhuan* also include poems that highlight the similarities between the battles at Poyang Lake and Red Cliff and between Liu Ji and Zhuge Liang, though these poems have been removed from later recensions.

This scene echoing the *Sanguo yanyi's* Red Cliff scene puts Guo Ying in a minor, yet crucial role: he is credited with single-handedly slaying Chen Youliang. In the midst of the fighting, a wild shot strikes Guo Ying in the arm. He pulls the arrow from his wound, places it in his bow, and fires it back at the enemy. Miraculously, it flies directly into Chen Youliang's eye socket and out through the back of his head, killing him instantly. Yet when the battle is over, Guo Ying hesitates to take credit for this incredible feat, saying only, 'It was brought about by the might of heaven and the calculations of the spirits; what accomplishment was it of your servant?' 天威神算所致，臣何功矣. Others speak out on his behalf to Taizu and even reveal to him the wound on Guo's arm. Greatly pleased with his humble and valiant servant, Taizu exclaims, 'With one arrow, Guo Ying has bested an army of 100,000—how could his

[38] On the fictionalization of Liu Ji in the *Yinglie zhuan* and other works of historical fiction, see Chan, 'Liu Ji's fictionalization'.

accomplishment be matched?' 郭英一箭勝十萬師，其功何可當也?[39] Thus, Guo Xun's ancestor is fashioned into a hero against a *Sanguo yanyi*-style backdrop.

It happens that this fictionalized account of Guo Ying's heroics in the *Yinglie zhuan* is very similar to one found in Guo Xun's *Sanjia shidian*, published in 1515. The *Sanjia shidian* version reads as follows:

> Our ancestor went on an expedition against Chen Youliang of the false Han and fought in the great battle at Poyang Lake. They battled to a standstill for days and nights on end. Ying's old wound had yet to heal, but he endured the pain, boarded a sea ship, and fought ferociously. They defeated the enemy at the mouth of a tributary river, burning down the ship of Chief Jiang of the impostor bandits. Then, Youliang was struck and killed by a stray arrow. There was word that this was Ying's accomplishment. His Majesty asked about it, and Ying said, 'It was the might of heaven and the calculations of the spirits; what power is it of your subject?' His Majesty rewarded him heavily.
>
> 上親征偽漢陳友諒，大戰鄱陽湖，相持連晝夜。英時瘡未瘳，力疾乘海船鏖戰，敗賊於涇江口，燒沒偽寇蔣知院船。已而，友諒中流矢死。有言英之功者，上問之，英曰：「天威神算，臣何力焉！」上益重之。

Guo Ying's response here echoes the one shown later in the fictionalized *Yinglie zhuan*, though expressed in more 'literary' language. Either Guo's 'marvelous plan' to win merit by 'falsifying records' had been long in the making, or Guo sincerely believed all along that his ancestor played this important role in the founding of the dynasty. Whatever the case may have been, Guo did indeed win promotion to the rank of duke in 1539, just two years after the *Yinglie zhuan* was created. The 'plan' was a success, but not for long: within three years of his promotion, Xun would die in prison.

Conclusion

[39] *Yingwu zhuan*, *juan* 5, section 6.

It is perhaps but an accident of history that no confirmed exemplars of Guo's vernacular fiction editions are now extant and that, unlike his other works, we know of them primarily through bibliographical records and gossip writings. This situation might also be a product of Guo's precipitous decline in reputation in the last years of his life, as official charges against him mounted. Yet Guo's other, surviving publications provide some insight into his multiple motivations for publishing. For Guo, print was a means to gain prestige and to publicize his family lineage, his military abilities, and his literary tastes. Not only the contents of the works but also their prefaces signed by prominent officials served these purposes for him. Additionally, as the preface to the Bai Juyi literary collection suggests, Guo printed books as means to curry favor in court circles, making available books that those circles desired. It is likely that Guo's vernacular fiction publications were similarly fine editions to be treasured, as the later Tiandu waichen preface to the *Shuihu zhuan* also suggests.

Guo's printed editions of vernacular novels were among the earliest known of the genre. Like Guo's other works, they likely circulated among literati in the capital. At this stage of the genre's development, vernacular fiction did not have the associations of 'vulgarity' it would acquire later, first as commercial publishers (and the 'village pedants' of whom Tiandu waichen complained) printed it and, later, as Qing scholars portrayed it as typical of the decadence that eventually led to the decline of the Ming. Nor did the genre have connotations of wild eccentricity that its later associations with figures such as Li Zhi, Feng Menglong, and Jin Shengtan would lend it. We have seen how, at this early stage, Li Kaixian and his acquaintances admired the *Shuihu zhuan* for its literary craft and dismissed those who would find fault with its content on moral or ideological grounds. These were men who had already mastered the conventional canon, and to whom vernacular literature was a new sort of literary game. These were the same sorts of circles within which drama and *qu* lyrics were in vogue, and knowledge of those forms served, in Patricia Sieber's words, 'an alternative to the narrowness of the contemporary examination curriculum'.[40] Such alternatives also provided a convenient point of intersection between those types of circles and a figure like Guo Xun. Born into a prestigious military family, Guo was highly literate yet outside the traditional literati class. Guo's

[40] Sieber, *Theaters*, 98. For Li Kaixian's circles and *qu* lyrics, see Tan, *Songs*, *passim*.

participation in these spheres is evidenced by his editing of the *Yongxi yuefu* collection, as well as his publication of the *Shiyun shiyi*, which was meant to aid the composition of lyrics.

It should be noted here that, in this respect, Guo's situation resembles that of another class of publishers, the Ming princes. Like Guo, members of the imperial house of Zhu used publishing to bolster their prestige and display their involvement in cultural activities. An apt example of commonalities between Guo's publishing and that of the Ming principalities is Guo's *Yongxi yuefu* collection: An expanded version that included *qu* art songs by Zhu Youdun, Prince Xian of Zhou, was printed in 1540 by the principality of Chu.[41] Zhu Youdun also wrote two *Shuihu zhuan*-related *zaju* dramas, which he published in 1433.[42] None of the princes is known to have delved into vernacular fiction publishing, however; perhaps the genre, with its battles and struggles, was too sensitive for the mostly self-consciously apolitical princes. Perhaps it was too new or rare for them in Guo's era, and too commonplace later.

Vernacular fiction in Guo's time appears to have been a literary game played through the medium of print, in which fine editions were circulated, most likely as gifts, among select cognoscenti in specific social circles. However, the situation changed quickly. Within a decade of Guo Xun's death, commercially printed editions of vernacular fiction novels began to appear. The first was the *Da Song yanyi zhongxing yinglie zhuan* 大宋演義中興英烈傳 (*An elaboration of the meaning of the record of the heroes of the restoration of the great Song*), a fictionalized version of the tale of the general Yue Fei 岳飛 printed by Xiong Damu 熊大木 in 1552. Xiong Damu also printed fictionalized accounts of the Han, Tang, and Northern and Southern Song dynasties. One modern scholar has termed the editing and revision of historical materials into vernacular fiction of this type the 'Xiong Damu mode' of production, theorizing that it came in response to the interest generated by the earlier *Sanguo yanyi*, *Shuihu zhuan*, and *Yinglie zhuan* and from a desire to emulate their success.[43]

The following decades would see both the rapid expansion of the commercial print industry and the flourishing of the vernacular novel. By the 1590s, publishers such as Yu

[41] See Chia, 'Publications of the Ming principalities', 36-7. For an in-depth survey of principality publishing, see Kerlouégan, 'Printing for prestige?'
[42] These plays most likely predate the advent of the novel version of the *Shuihu* story cycle: see Idema, 'Zhu Youdun's dramatic prefaces and traditional fiction: an addendum'.
[43] See Chen Dakang, *Mingdai xiaoshuo shi*,. 229-56.

Xiangdou were producing commercial editions of the *Sanguo yanyi* and the *Shuihu zhuan*, and the Yang Mingfeng edition of the *Yinglie zhuan* appeared as well. In this world of commercial printing, these novels were published along with encyclopedias for everyday use, joke books, calendars, and other such materials, rather than the family histories, poetry anthologies, and *qu* lyric collections that made up Guo's printing project. In this new context of the marketplace, the novels took on new forms and meanings. They were transformed to suit the tastes of new, growing audiences through the freewheeling, 'cut-and-paste' editing practices that had become commonplace among for-profit publishers in the late Ming.[44] Once the domain of elite civil and military officials, the novels had become commodities for sale in the marketplace.

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[44] On the 'hucksterish' printing practices of the late Ming, see He, *Home and the World*.

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