

PRINCELY COURTS OF THE MING DYNASTY

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Imperial clansmen and their courts in the provinces figure only minimally in Western scholarship on Ming history. Such an omission is curious; it is impossible to read more than a few entries of the *Ming Veritable Records* without running across imperial clansmen. The central court registered their births and deaths, granted investitures and titles, provided stipends and gifts; it investigated their transgressions, adjudicated crimes, and imposed punishments; it negotiated requests for construction funds, special titles, and irregular succession choices. It attempted to balance imperial generosity and vigilance, underwriting the conspicuous consumption and cultural patronage that augmented the central court's grandeur and prestige while guarding against threats to the imperial government's authority, whether it was challenging local magistrates or staging armed insurrections. Civil ministers regularly memorialized on clansmen's stipends, titles, mausoleums, personnel, revenue, and myriad other topics. Thus, imperial clansmen in the provinces consumed the attention and resources of the central court at a voracious rate.

If we shift our perspective from the center to the provinces, princely houses (王府) were often among the most powerful actors in local society. They lived in enormous walled compounds, the largest of which resembled cities within cities. Estimated to have measured approximately 1.5 square kilometers, the Qin House occupied nearly a tenth of the area within Xi'an; the Zhou House sat conspicuously in the middle of Kaifeng, on the former site of the Song capital.¹ Their residences were architectural statements of imperial status: their buildings were topped with the princes' distinctive green roof-tiles; their gates were protected by imposing spirit walls emblazoned with colorful four-clawed imperial dragons rendered in glazed tiles. When the heads of princely houses ventured into the city, they travelled in grand processions with armed guards, eunuchs, and other visible signs of their exalted status. Senior civil officials yielded to them, dismounting from their horses and bowing to confirm and reinforce the social hierarchy. Princely houses held portfolios of urban properties including hostels and warehouses, some that they managed themselves and others that they rented. By virtue of their social prestige, legal privileges, and wealth, princely courts drew a wide variety of local men and women into their orbit, from scholars, civil officials, military officers, and well-known religious figures to shamans, physiognomic experts, fertile young local women, and men of force. The absence of princely houses from our vision of Ming urban history owes much to the fact the imperial family did not live in the cities we know best. English language studies in Ming

urban history have centered on Beijing, Suzhou, Nanjing, Quanzhou, and the southeast at the expense of the frontier and interior.

Both the *Veritable Records* and more specialized compendia such as *A Statutes Reference* (條例備考) and *Governmental Policies and Regulations Related to the Princely Houses of the August Ming* (皇明藩府政令) show that imperial clansmen in the provinces assiduously pursued their social, economic, political, and legal interests through nearly constant negotiations with local and central authorities. Such sources also reveal the incessant and sometimes violent jockeying for power and status within each house. Which son would succeed to the father's title? Which brother could be discredited through accusations of drunken incompetence, humiliating local officials, or even treason? Which consort would consolidate her place within the household? When would rape, murder, and torture be ignored and when would the central court demand a full account? Ambitious members of princely houses devoted much time and thought to such calculations. Our knowledge of these family feuds usually depends on the quality of imperial investigations and what the court felt appropriate to reveal in records (like the *Veritable Records*) that it knew might become public knowledge. However incomplete or opaque surviving records may be, if carefully cultivated, they can yield, as Lei Bingyan and Jérôme Kerlouégan have shown, a rich harvest.²

Until recently, Western language scholarship focused almost exclusively on princes' place in dynastic or national narratives. Treatments of the early Ming commonly discuss Hongwu's policy of using his sons as dynastic bulwarks, the Yan Prince's rebellion, and the Han Prince's abortive coup of 1425, because they all bore on the main story of the dynasty's establishment, its first great crisis, and the policies that greatly diminished the princes' stature in the polity. The Ning Prince's revolt merits brief mention, because it feeds into favorite storylines—the feckless Zhengde emperor and the scholar-hero Wang Yangming.³ The princes largely fade from view until the late Ming, when the imperial family imploded. Only recently have we begun to reconsider imperial princes as important actors whose considerable resources influenced local social, cultural, and religious life and whose status as members of the imperial family bound them to the wider polity.

Explaining research trends is a perilous enterprise, but several paths have led scholars to the provincial courts. First, imperial clansmen may be considered the latest iteration of local or regional history. For several decades, scholars have focused on elite families and their strategies to enhance status and position at home and on a national stage. Such an orientation often ran parallel to interest in regional economies, religious practices, and artistic traditions. As we have broadened our area of inquiry beyond Jiangnan, the capital, and the southeastern seaboard, provincial courts have become more difficult to ignore. As Yang Xiaoneng and Richard Wang both note in their essays, hundreds of princes of the first and second ranks established courts across much of the empire. Second, the rapidly growing body of work on Ming publishing and book culture has drawn attention to the role of princely houses as publishers, authors, and book collectors, bringing to light both important new sources and imperial clansmen's roles in cultural patronage, religious activities, and intellectual life.⁴ Finally, a renewed interest in the central court, its composition, and its connections to the rest of the empire informs some scholarship on the provincial courts.⁵

Following a different trajectory than English language studies, scholarship in the People's Republic of China (PRC) on princely courts deserves a discussion equal to its richness and complexity, but a few tentative generalizations are possible.⁶ First, princely courts have long occupied a more prominent place in PRC histories of the Ming, often with particular focus on areas most neglected in English language work, for instance the extent and nature of princely landholdings, relations with farmers, and conflicts with local magistrates over rents (both rates and collection) and the control of salt, fish, and other tax revenues.⁷ Other studies have examined princely courts' involvement in commercial investment, money lending, and controlling prices in local markets.⁸ Second, interest in the princely estates grew out of a more general critique of the *ancien régime*. Provincial princes were the local representatives of the imperial family that sat atop the oppressive feudal order. Thus, much scholarship centered on the deleterious impact of princely courts on Ming governance, local order, and the people's livelihood. Third, in a sense, PRC scholars were picking up where Ming commentators, especially those who navigated the turbulent Ming-Qing transition, had left off; survivors had painted individual imperial clansmen as privileged and corrupt and the institution of princely courts, government stipends, and prohibitions against employment as fundamentally flawed. Such a characterization of princely houses does not do justice to the complexity of contemporary political discourse, but it is the line that Chinese scholars during the twentieth century developed most fully.⁹ Numerous studies have examined the ever-expanding ranks of the imperial clan, the state's disastrous financial commitment to their support, and the consequences of such a burden to local people, including resentment and alienation from the regime.¹⁰ Running throughout was the recurring theme that imperial clansmen abused their privileged position to defy local officials, oppress common subjects, indulge in immoral behavior, exacerbate class conflict, and ultimately, hasten the dynasty's fall.

More recently, scholars have begun to offer a more balanced assessment of princely courts. Su Derong 蘇德榮 has explicitly challenged the characterization of the imperial family in the provinces as purely parasitic, stressing their patronage of scholarship, painting, and publishing.¹¹ There has also been increasing attention to provincial princes as facets of local history or regional identity, with studies devoted to individual and clusters of houses.¹² Such a trend seems likely to continue, given the steady production of MA and PhD theses devoted to particular princely courts, often taking advantage of universities' physical proximity to princely courts and mausoleums. Finally, sometimes an individual scholar can open up areas of inquiry almost single-handedly, as Lei Bingyan 雷炳炎 has done for crime and punishment among the imperial princes.¹³

If this preliminary survey gives a rough sense of the major approaches to princely courts in recent decades, what lies ahead? The institutional details of individual princely courts' economic, administrative, and military operations must be a high priority if we hope to move beyond vague generalizations that reveal little of local conditions. If imperial princes are mentioned in treatments of the Ming, it is usually in discussions of either the first or last few reigns of the dynasty. What are the contours of the intervening two centuries? How did the nature and place of provincial courts change over time and vary by region? The relation of princely courts to each other and to the central courts in Beijing and Nanjing, their

place in contemporary political discourse, and their significance in foreign relations too would repay careful consideration. Conceptualizing the princely courts as an integral element of local history raises questions about imperial clansmen's identity as imperial representatives and local actors. In his magisterial study of Henan during the Ming, Roger Des Forges discusses the Zhou Prince of Kaifeng and imperial clansmen as symbols of state authority as much as local elites.¹⁴

One consequence of the provincial courts' marginal place in our narratives of the Ming period is that our descriptive vocabulary and analytical schema remain underdeveloped. How are we to describe these clansmen and their courts? "Prince" has been the most common translation of *wang* 王 for the Ming period (perhaps derived from late nineteenth-century British usage for the Qing imperial family, for instance Prince Gong, 1833–1898). However, Craig Clunas has argued that 'king' better reflects the early Ming state's evocation of the kings of the Zhou period, which were ostensibly the inspiration for Hongwu's decision to augment the imperial bureaucracy by investing his sons in strategic areas throughout the empire.¹⁵ Charles Hucker translates the two highest ranks of imperial clansmen as imperial prince (*qin wang* 親王) and commandery prince (*jun wang* 郡王), reflecting the important divide with all lesser degrees of imperial clansmen, whose titles did not include the term *wang*.¹⁶ Such distinctions in nomenclature reflected important differences in family hierarchy, succession prospects, legal status, economic standing, and social position. Although imperial and commandery princes were among the most affluent and influential local actors in places like Taiyuan, Datong, and Xi'an, the lowest ranks of imperial clansmen often faced dire economic and social straits.

Scholars in the People's Republic of China generally consider provincial imperial clansmen as part of the history of the imperial family rather than as court culture or the history of courts. How useful are terms like the central, provincial, or regional courts? Is it possible or productive to periodize courts? Should we, for instance, be thinking in terms of early Ming, mid-Ming, and late Ming provincial courts? How would a chronology of provincial courts track with better explored developments in society, economy, and thought? Are there recognizable differences among the courts that could be used to generate categories of courts, for instance, northern and southern courts, hinterland and borderland courts, large and small courts, more or less affluent courts? Were there clusters of courts that interacted with sufficient intensity to develop distinctive features, a league of courts as it were? In terms of interaction with local traditions, what is the relevance of such notions as localization, appropriation, syncretism, fusion, and hybridism to understanding courts?

The essays in this special issue do not claim definitive answers to the questions above but do suggest a few promising lines of inquiry. One of the richest and most promising avenues for advancing our understanding of Ming history in general and the Ming princes in particular is archeology. Graves, funerary artifacts, and interior art offer a wealth of evidence on Ming material culture, visual culture, technology, representations of status, and notions of the afterworld. Although early excavation reports sometimes lacked detail, diagrams, or illustrations, more recent work, for instance the write-ups for the tomb of the Zhuang Prince of Liang 梁莊王, are positively luxurious, with dozens of high quality color photographs,

scores of detailed line drawings, meticulous maps of the grave sites, and exhaustive catalogs of funerary artifacts.¹⁷ Archeological materials can be particularly useful for corroborating, challenging, or recasting interpretations derived primarily from documentary evidence. Although art historians and more recently scholars interested in publishing and book collecting have begun to exploit archeological finds, for most other historians they remain a largely untapped source.

Yang Xiaoneng's *Archeological Perspectives on the Princely Burials of the Ming Dynasty Enfeofments* provides a valuable point of entry into the expanding archeological scholarship on Ming princely graves and their contents. After describing several illustrative examples of relatively well-preserved graves and funerary artifacts, Yang discusses what he calls the characteristics and practices of Ming princely burials. Archeologists have generated schema for northern and southern burial styles and essayed periodizations for Ming princely tombs, but Yang urges caution. Factual inaccuracies flaw some such studies, but the more fundamental difficulty is variation according to time, place, and individuals. He stresses that often the preferences of the tomb owner and his/her family rather than imperial regulations guided the layout, decoration, and provisioning of tombs, as, for example, when the first Ning Prince, Zhu Quan (Hongwu's thirteenth son) elected to be buried in Daoist apparel rather than a dragon robe as was standard among princes. Even within a single princely house, variation renders overarching characterizations difficult. Although it is tempting to conclude that tomb size or the richness of funerary artifacts reflect political influence, Yang notes the tomb with the most lavish burial goods excavated to date belonged to the short-lived Hongxi's ninth son, Prince Zhuang of Liang, hardly a big wheel. The Zhuang Prince died without a male successor, and perhaps thus his family fortunes were buried with him. If individual variation stymies generalizations, the discovery of gold objects inscribed with the characters "Imperial Silverwork bureau" in Beijing provides evidence of institutional links between the central and provincial courts. Further investigation is needed to understand the duration and depth of such connections.

Yang's essay suggests several promising approaches for contextualizing Ming princely courts in Ming society. First is a systematic comparison between tomb construction, decoration, and funerary objects of the upper ranks of Ming imperial clansmen and those of other Ming elites. We know that Ming princes interacted with local elite families in their religious, literary, economic, and social activities and that imperial clansmen were not immune to wider tastes and fashions in everything from poetry and publishing to jewelry and cuisine. As major concerns in life, it seems likely that the topics of death, funerals, burials, tombs, and funerary artifacts surfaced in interactions with local elites; we know that some princes commissioned funerary inscriptions by scholars. Both sides may have emulated elements of the other's funerary practices. Such a comparison may shed light on the position of Ming courts in society and their interaction with local elites over time. A second approach implicit in Yang Xiaoneng's essay is analysis of funerary goods as imperial clansmen's efforts at self-representation. Clothing, personal ornaments, and accompanying objects can reveal much about the image that individual male and female members of the imperial family wished to project—Daoist devotee, cultured scholar of learning, believer of Tibetan Buddhism, connoisseur, humble man of few wants, proud wife, or devoted

consort. Yang notes that above ground architecture and sculpture were directed at a living audience whereas underground objects were intended for the deceased in the afterlife. This seems a sensible suggestion, but was the line absolute and how do we know? One would also like much more information about who made the decisions about burial arrangements. We can assume that individuals expressed preferences or even issued definite orders, but were they always followed? What of those who died unexpectedly without leaving clear instructions? Was there a default ‘standard burial package’ within each princely house? None of these questions have immediate or obvious answers, but integrating archeological evidence and documentary materials seems the mostly likely approach to yield results.

In *The Ming Princely Patronage of Daoist Temples*, Richard Wang draws on a wealth of local gazetteers and stele inscriptions to reveal in unprecedented detail the enormous scale of princely engagement with Daoism and Daoist institutions.¹⁸ Wang documents that 287 princes from 143 courts engaged in worship and/or patronage of Daoism. Forms of patronage included founding and renovating temples, granting lands to temples to underwrite their expenses, and contributing silver, bells, statues, books, incense, inscriptions, and plaques. Patronage patterns mirrored the princes’ multiple identities. As members of the imperial family with ties to the central court, several princes facilitated gifts of the *Daozang* (道藏) from the emperor to Daoist temples. As members of a dynastic elite, princes patronized national Daoist sites, as seen in the ‘tea temples’ established at the foot of Mount Wudang and in gifts of silver, calligraphy, and religious objects to temples in Nanjing and Beijing. As members of a princely house, they often continued their forefathers’ patronage of particular temples generation after generation. As city-dwellers, they directed the majority of their largesse to urban temples, usually in their fief-cities. As a result, princes “became a highly visible component of the public landscape.” At the same time, Daoism shaped the physical and mental landscapes of princely houses. Several princes built Daoist edifices (temples, abbeys, halls, shrines) on their complex grounds. Others used Daoist temples as “family shrines” 家廟, either building (or purchasing) temples expressly for such a purpose or designating temples as their “clan cloister” 香火院. Such religious practices often were reduplicated through clans and lineages generation after generation, becoming family tradition and part of princely houses’ identity.

Wang argues that princes “mediated between official religious policy and the commoners’ interests.” Imperial clansmen in the provinces displayed their status and power through visible patronage of thriving Daoist temples; they also gained access to liturgical experiences that satisfied religious and secular needs. He suggests that the state’s support for Daoism and its strict regulation of the princes created conditions beneficial to Daoism’s growth. Wang believes that princely engagement with Daoism was driven by clansmen’s loss of political and military power, their lack of autonomy, and their dependence on the state. In turn, local Daoist priests and institutions exploited princely connections to secure patronage and expand their own influence, “probably going beyond the limits posed by the government.”

Wang’s work reminds us of the princes’ ambiguous place in the polity. He characterizes the central court as an “unfriendly force,” deeply suspicious of the princes, who it kept under strict surveillance. At the same time, he shows that the

princes' ties to the throne endowed them with social standing and economic resources that few individual families of the gentry could match. Clansmen were tied by blood and institutions to an imperial family that stretched across much of the empire, yet the range of their activities and the focus of their energies were generally limited to the narrow world of the city in which they lived. They might patronize temples in distant Wudang or Beijing, but unlike the literati, officials, soldiers, priests, merchants, peddlers, or even destitute beggars, they could not visit the recipients of their largesse without special and rarely granted permission from the throne.

My essay also considers the princes' fraught position in the polity through analysis of an early sixteenth-century uprising by the Anhua Prince 安化王. Although princely houses may have been "infantilized," as Kerlouégan¹⁹ has observed, stripped of their political and military powers and responsibilities, they remained dangerous. The most dramatic princely uprisings occurred during the early decades of the fifteenth century, however, lesser uprisings continued throughout most of the Ming. Thus, although we might be tempted to dismiss provincial princes as irrelevant in the wider scheme of things, the central court considered them potential threats to dynastic stability and never abandoned its security measures. Princes were not to leave their cities without special permission (even to visit family graves in nearby suburbs) or meet with fellow princes, local military authorities, or resident civil officials; their marriage partners were monitored; they were forbidden to maintain anything more than an honor guard; and they were not to visit the capital, even to visit dying relatives or mourn the dead. The central government enforced such rules with varying degrees of vigor, but it never considered dropping them.

The central court faced a dilemma. It invested heavily in imperial clansmen, granting them stipends, special sumptuary and legal privileges, gifts of books, textiles, artwork, clothing, jewelry, and more, to foster corporate loyalty, to remind local populations of the imperial family's reach, and perhaps more cynically to reduce discontent among the ranks of men who might otherwise feel justified in challenging the current head of the imperial family. At the same time, all those perks, those visible reminders of provincial clansmen's identity as members of the imperial family, gave them a political legitimacy that other rebels lacked.²⁰ When the Yan Prince revolted, he justified his actions by claiming that he was assisting the throne as a member of the imperial family. Similarly the Anhua Prince of the Qing House 慶府 in the northwestern garrison city of Ningxia explained his 1510 revolt as an attempt to remove the powerful palace eunuch Liu Jin (劉瑾) from power. Liu Jin's avarice and contempt for established order, seen most notably in his new tax assessments on land, had sparked resentment from Liaodong to Ningxia, among both civil and military populations, the prince and his advisors insisted. To remove Liu was to save the dynasty, which, as a member of the imperial family, the Anhua Prince had both the right and responsibility to do. The audience for such dramatic claims likely included fellow members of the imperial family, the military, the civil bureaucracy, and the general population. The Anhua Prince convinced a portion of the Ningxia garrisons to join him in armed insurrection. He also cajoled or coerced fellow members of the Qing House, a portion of local officials, and a big chunk of Ningxia's population into following him. The Anhua prince and his advisors had cultivated ties with several garrison

officers through personal attention, banquets, and loans in silver. His image in the city of Ningxia is unclear, but he was concerned to win popular support, printing and posting broadsheets explaining his actions in terms of dynastic loyalty and promising strict discipline among the troops. For fear that the prince might win broader support and for fear that his revolt would leave the dynasty vulnerable to Mongol attack, Zhengde (正德) and his senior ministers quickly dispatched 30,000 elite troops from the capital garrisons under the command of a veteran military commander and an experienced civil official (Yang Yiqing, 楊一清), both of whom had personal links to Ningxia, especially its military garrisons.

The Anhua Prince was almost immediately captured by a daring local military officer acting largely on his own initiative, the imperial army was recalled, and Yang Yiqing set to work restoring order in Ningxia. Although Yang Yiqing focused on addressing the concerns of local military populations, identifying problems within the Qing House and its collateral branches, and trying the Anhua Prince, the uprising quickly was appropriated for political purposes at the central court. The Anhua Prince's revolt was the last nail in Liu Jin's coffin. A eunuch whose greed and power were so great to spark a princely revolt was a danger to the dynasty and had to die, insisted his critics. Yang Yiqing and another influential palace eunuch, Zhang Yong (張永) (also sent to Ningxia to put down the revolt), persuaded Zhengde to execute Liu Jin. From the Ming to the present, nearly all narratives frame the prince's revolt in terms of Liu Jin's policies and his eventual fall. The prince as a powerful local patron with deep connections to the Ningxia officer corps and other resident elites; a lord, stroked and manipulated by his colorful entourage, was thus transformed into a bit player in the more central drama of Liu Jin, the Zhengde emperor, and his officials in Beijing. My essay attempts a portrayal of the Anhua Prince as a member of the Qing House and part of the local elite of Ningxia, but only partially extricates the prince from our court-centered sources.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Shi Hongshuai 史紅帥, *Ming Qing shiqi Xi'an chengshi dili yanjiu* 明清時期西安城市地理研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008), pp. 26–29. For a map of the Zhou House, see Roger Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History: Northeast Henan in the Fall of the Ming* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), Map 3.2 (p. 147).
- ² Lei Bingyan 雷炳炎, “Mingdai zongfan sili fengdi yu yuezou wenti shulun” 明代宗藩私離封地與越奏問題述論, *Human gongye daxue xuebao* 湖南工業大學學報 (*shehui kexue ban* 社會科學版), 14.2 (2009): 12–15, 19; “Mingdai zongshi de qingzha yu zhengdou shulun” 明代宗室的傾軋與爭鬥述論, *Hengyang shifan xueyuan xuebao* 衡陽師範學院學報, 4 (2009): 90–94; Jérôme Kerlouégan, “Even Animals Do Not Do Such Things!": The Evil Deeds of Princes in the Mid-Ming,” presented at the “The Provincial Courts of the Ming Dynasty” conference held at Colgate University in June 2011.
- ³ Far less attention is given to the remarkably broad and complex patronage networks that the Ning Prince and his predecessors developed in Jiangxi and beyond.
- ⁴ Lucille Chia, “Ming Principality Publishing: A Study of Non-commercial Printing,” *Ming Studies*, 54 (Fall 2006): 24–70; Zhao Qian 趙前 and Zhang Zhiqing 張志清, “Book Publishing by the Princely Household during the Ming Dynasty: A Preliminary Study,” *East Asian Library Journal*, 10.1 (Spring 2001): 85–128; Richard Wang, “Cultivation and Book Culture: A Study of the Ming Princely Patronage of Daoism,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* (forthcoming); Jérôme Kerlouégan, “Printing for Prestige? Publishing and Publications by Ming Princes, Part One,” *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 1.1 (2011): 39–73; “Printing for Prestige? Publishing and Publications by Ming Princes, Part Two,” *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 1.2 (2011): 105–144.
- ⁵ See the essays in *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368–1644)*, edited by David Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Robinson, *Martial Spectacles at the Ming Court of China, 1368–1568* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013), esp. chapter two, which examines provincial courts. Such publications build upon earlier scholarship, including James Geiss, “Peking Under the Ming (1368–1644),” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1979); Ellen Soulliere, “Palace Women in the Ming Dynasty: 1368–1644,” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1987); “The Imperial Marriages of the Ming Dynasty,” *Papers on Far Eastern History*, no. 37 (1988): 15–42. Although his principal interest was Zhu Yuanzhang’s relations with his sons, Hok-lam Chan 陳學霖 shed considerable light on the often disturbing activities of early Ming princes at their courts. See Chan, “Ming Taizu’s Problem with His Sons: Prince Qin’s Criminality and Early-Ming Politics,” *Asia Major*, 3d series 20, no. 1 (2007): 54–103; “Ming Taizu *Ji fei lu shu hou*” 明太祖《紀非錄》書後, *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報, 45 (2005), rpt. in idem, *Song Ming shi luncong* 宋明史論叢 (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011); “Guan-yu Ming Taizu huangdi qinlu de shiliao” 關於《明太祖皇帝欽錄》的史料, *Jinan shixue* 暨南史學 (Guangzhou Jinan University 廣州暨南大學), 2 (2003), rpt. in idem, *Song Ming shi luncong*.
- ⁶ For useful reviews of scholarship in the People’s Republic of China, see Hu Fan 胡凡, “Bashi niandai Mingdai zongfan yanjiu shuping” 八十年代明代宗藩研究述評, *Mindaishi kenkyū* 明代史研究 20 (1992); Yang Zhiqing 楊志清, “Jin shinian lai Mingdai zongfan yanjiu zongshu” 近十年來明代宗藩研究總述,

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- 7 Wang Yuquan 王毓銓, “Mingdai wangfu de zhuangtian” 明代王府的莊田, (1964), rpt. in idem *Laiwuji* 萊蕪集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), pp. 110–241; Shi Zhenglian 施正廉, “Mingdai nanfang de Anlu huangzhuang” 明代南方的安陸皇莊, *Mingshi yanjiu luncong* 明史研究論叢, 3 (1985): 112–128; Jiang Zuyuan 蔣祖緣, “Ming zhonghouqi fanwang de datudi zhanyou” 明中後期藩王的大土地占有, *Mingshi yanjiu luncong*, 4 (1991): 299–319; Su Derong 蘇德榮, “Lu Wangfu de zhuangtian, dianye kaoshu” 潞王府的莊田, 店業考述, *Mingshi yanjiu luncong*, 5 (1991): 105–124.
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- 10 Wu Jihua 吳緝華, “Lun Mingdai zongfan renkou” 論明代宗藩人口, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, 41.3 (1970): 1–32, rpt. in idem, *Mingdai shehui jingjishi luncong* 明代社會經濟史論叢 (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 237–289; Gu Cheng 顧誠, “Mingdai de zongshi” 明代的宗室, in *Ming Qing shi guoji xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* 明清史國際學術討論會論文集, ed. Ming Qing shi guoji xueshu taolunhui, Lunwenji mishuchu, Lunwenzu 明清史國際學術討論會論文集秘書處論文組 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 89–111; Zhao Yi 趙毅, “Mingdai zongshi renkou yu zonglu wenti” 明代宗室人口與宗祿問題, *Changchun shifan xuebao* 長春師院學報 (*zheshheban* 哲社版), 1986, no. 2: 13–19; Zhi Fucheng 智夫成, “Mingdai zongshi renkou de xunmeng zengzhang yu jiechi cuoshi” 明代宗室人口的迅猛增長與節制措施, *Zhongzhou xuekan* 中州月刊, 4 (1990): 121–126.
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- “Mingdai Jingjianwang shehui diwei kao” 明代靖江王社會地位考, *Guangxi shifan daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexueban)*, 2 (1999): 91–97; Lin Zhe 林哲, *Guilin Jingjiang wangfu* 桂林靖江王府 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2009); Zhu Fangshu 朱方樞, *Ming Jingjiangwang erbai bashinian* 明靖江王二百八十年 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010); An Jiesheng 安介生, “Mingdai Shanxi fanfu de renkou zengzhang yu shuliang tongji” 明代山西藩府的人口增長與數量統計, *Shixue yuekan* 史學月刊, 5 (2004): 97–104.
- ¹³ Lei’s work includes but is not limited to: “Fan pan? Jian yue? —Mingdai zongshi ‘mou fan,’ ‘bu gui’ wenti bianxi” 反叛?僭越?—明代宗室“謀逆,”“不軌”問題辨析, *Hunan keji xueyuan xuebao* 湖南科技學院學報, 30.10 (2009), p. 80; “Tantan Mingdai zhongqi zuizong shuren de anzhi wenti” 談談明代中期罪宗庶人的安置問題, *Huxiang luntan* 湖湘論壇, 1 (2003): 90–91; “Mingdai zhongqi zuizong shuren guanli wenti chutan” 明代中期罪宗庶人管理問題初探, *Chuanshan xuekan* 船山學刊, 1 (2003): 96–100; “Mingdai zhongqi zuizong shuren guilei lunxi” 明代中期罪宗庶人歸類論析, *Hunan shehui kexue* 湖南社會科學, 2 (2003): 145–148; “Guanyu Mingdai zhongqi zongshi fanzui wenti de sikao” 關於明代中期宗室犯罪問題的思考, *Quisuo* 求索, 10 (2004): 232–234; “Wangfuguan yu Mingdai zongshi fanzui guanxi tanlun” 王府官與明代宗室犯罪關係探論, *Xiangtan daxue xuebao* 湘潭大學學報 (*zhexue shehui kexue ban* 哲學社會科學版), 5 (2010): 130–134.
- ¹⁴ Des Forges, *Cultural Centrality and Political Change in Chinese History*, pp. 15–21. In fact, the princes appear in a chapter on representatives of imperial authority rather than local elites. An important political history of the Ming period similarly discusses princely houses in the context of a) the emperor, imperial power, and the imperial capital, and b) princely rebellions against the dynasty. See *Mingdai zhengzhishi* 明代政治史, ed. Zhang Xianqing 張顯清 and Lin Jinshu 林金樹 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 193–201, vol. 2, pp. 751–65.
- ¹⁵ Craig Clunas, *Screen of Kings: Art, Power, and Imperial Clan in Ming China* (Reaktion Press, forthcoming).
- ¹⁶ Charles Hucker, “Ming Government,” in *The Cambridge of History of China, Volume 8, The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Frederick Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 9–105, esp. 26–27. Hucker translates the successively less prestigious titles as defender-general of the state 鎮國將軍, bulwark-general of the state 輔國將軍, supporter-general of the state 奉國將軍, defender-commandant of the state 鎮國中尉, bulwark-commandant of the state 輔國中尉.
- ¹⁷ Hubeisheng bowuguan 湖北省博物館, ed., *Liang zhuang wang mu he Zhengde shidai de guibao* 梁莊王墓鄭和時代的瑰寶 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007); Hubeisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 and Zhongxiangshi bowuguan 鐘祥市博物館, eds., *Liang zhuang wang mu* 梁莊王墓 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007).
- ¹⁸ Wang’s essay builds on more than a decade of research. See Richard Wang, “Four Steles at the Monastery of Sublime Mystery (Xuanmiao guan): A Study of Daoism and Society on the Ming Frontier,” *Asia Major* 3rd series, 13.2 (2000): 37–82; “Ming Princes and Daoist Ritual,” *T’oung-pao*, 95.1–3 (2009): 51–119; “Cultivation and Book Culture: A Study of the Ming Princely Patronage of Daoism.” For full articulation of the project and voluminous documentation, see his *The Ming Prince and Daoism* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- ¹⁹ Jérôme Kerlouégan, “Printing for Prestige? Publishing and Publications by Ming Princes, Part One,” *East Asian Publishing and Society*, 1. 1 (2011), p. 55.
- ²⁰ Perhaps wishing to capitalize on its legitimacy, Li Zicheng used the Qin House complex as the headquarters for his Shun dynasty.

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