

Abstracts ENG-CH

A Market for Manuscripts:
Scribal Publishing and Entertainment Literature in 19th century Beijing

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ABSTRACT

In the 19th century, which lies late in the history of commercial printing in China, a flourishing literature of entertainment circulated through the handwritten medium in the urban center of Beijing. Thousands of manuscripts collected in the area in the early 20th century trace their origins to shops which specialized in the handwritten production of stories and songs, nourished by the vibrant musical and theatrical culture of the capital. In this talk I provide a look at Baiben Zhang (“Mr. Zhang of the hundred volumes”), the most prominent of its milieu, and its operational model from production and branding and to pricing and distribution. With products spanning the range of northern performance genres and titles numbering at least in the hundreds, the success of Baiben Zhang calls to attention important channels of commercial manuscript production and distribution in the late Qing. I conclude with questions on the distinctness of Beijing as a locale, the circulation of popular literature in the urban setting, and factors behind the continuity of scribal operations in an age perceived to be dominated by print.

以百本張書坊為個案：清代後期北京抄書業與俗文學的流通

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[內容提要]

晚清在近代出版史上讓人聯想到的或許是公共傳媒與新進印刷術，而在此時的北京城內，多種讀物繼續以手寫媒介發行流通。民國間北平學人蒐集的大量曲本中，數以千計原來自百本張等專以抄寫發售通俗曲本為業的清代書坊，這些抄坊的營業目錄與多種現存抄本提示其在清代後期相當的生產規模。此講座以百本張為中心展開討論，包括其品牌，定價，產品種類，直到從抄本手跡中可窺視到的傳抄過程，與書坊在廟會發售書本的傳統營銷模式。此個案應引發多方面的思考，包括京城獨特的地域性，都市間通俗文學的流通，以及結合傳統技術與娛樂文化的抄書業能在公認為印刷主導時代繼以興榮的種種原因。