

stage of a commodity economy, based on mass-production of ritual or everyday objects in huge factories.³⁷ The studies also show that it is beneficial, and indeed necessary, for the archaeologists who deal with matters in economy to conduct research under agendas developed by social historians, so the meaning of their material evidence can be fully appreciated by historians in cross-cultural analyses. On the other hand, historians of China have also begun to take the period into their general account of the economic development of pre-modern China.³⁸ However, we are yet to see systematic analyses of the period as a whole that can both establish the theoretic framework and methodological guidelines, and also account for its archaeological as well as paleographic evidence. Such studies should have the potential to explain economic changes in the centuries during which the territorial state was formed, thus offering new explanations about the rise of the imperial economy.

This is an important book, and it will be remembered as one of the stepping stones by which the study of the economic history of early China has taken off. There is still a long way to go for early China scholars to develop their own positions about the economy of early states and empires, but the way was even longer without the contributions in this book.

Localizing Learning, the Literati Enterprise in Wuzhou, 1100–1600

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The enticing title of this book suggests many intriguing questions. What is learning? How might it be “localized”? What would “localizing learning” do to local society?

³⁷For instance, Sun Zhouyong, *Craft Production in the Western Zhou Dynasty 1046–771 BC*, Bar International Series 1777 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008); Roderick Campbell, “Consumption, Exchange and Production at the Great Settlement Shang: Bone-Working at Tiesanlu, Anyang,” *Antiquity* 85.330 (2011), 1279–97. For other studies of economy by archaeologists, see Dongming Wu, “The Bronze Economy and the Making of the Southern Borderlands under the Zhou Dynasty (1045–256 BCE)” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2022). See also two papers by Lothar von Falkenhausen, “An Archaeological Perspective on the Chu Economy,” in *Chu wenhua yu Changjiang zhongyou zaoqi kaifa guoji xueshu yantao hui lunwen ji* 楚文化與長江中游早期開發國際學術研討會論文集, edited by Xu Shaohua 徐少華, et al (Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe, 2021), 116–38; “The Economy of Qin: An Archaeological Assessment” (Unpublished paper posted at Academia.edu). For two papers that analyze inscriptional evidence, see Constance A. Cook, “Wealth and the Western Zhou,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 60.2 (1997), 253–94; Li Feng, “A New Look at the Sanshi Pan 散氏盤,” 1–10.

³⁸See Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 11–83.

Peter Bol goes a long way towards answering these questions. What counts as “learning” has always been problematic because learned individuals cannot always agree as to what it is for. In the eleventh century, intellectual heavy-weight Zhu Xi 朱熹 opted for the moral goal of self-cultivation even as other teachers were preparing students for the pragmatic goal of examination success. Lü Zuqian 吕祖谦 in Wuzhou 婺州 seems to have steered a middle course in advocating broad learning; that is to say, learning that included not only ancient texts but also practical matters that might be employed in government.

Whether it was due to the attraction of Lü Zuqian’s pedagogy or because the more successful a local economy became the more locals there were who wanted to attend school, Wuzhou became a hotbed of schools. Reasonably enough, where schools prospered, publishing houses followed. Learning prospers when printers turn out books, but faced with many books, readers resort to short-cuts. In Wuzhou, those short-cuts were known as “category books” (*leishu* 类书), summaries of published works arranged in novel manners. Their editors, no doubt, justified their editorial arrangements as yet another layer of scholarship.

It did not take long for pedigree to be built into the transmission of learning. By the thirteenth century—two generations after Lü Zuqian—the “four masters” came to be established as successors in a Wuzhou Daoxue 道学 tradition. No doubt the masters were as learned as they were prolific, but as Bol also tells us, pedigree mattered because it had to be said that “Zhu Xi’s son-in-law Huang Gan 黄榦 ‘in fact transmitted [Zhu Xi’s] Way to Mr. He [Ji] [何基] of Beishan [北山],’ whence it was transmitted to Wang Bo [王柏] and Jin Lüxiang [金履祥], and finally to Xu Qian [许谦].” (123) Their writings indicate that they were aware of the continuity of their learnings, and, if their own awareness was not sufficient, it was made explicit by Wu Shidao’s 吴师道 chronicle of Wuzhou scholarship written in 1334. In other parts of Yuan dynasty China, similar claims to pedigree with some focus on the place of origin of the scholars involved were also being made.

The first of the four masters, He Ji, was born in 1188 and the last, Xu Qian, died in 1337. The dates matter because they show that the four spanned the last decades of the Southern Song and the first few of the Yuan. The onset of the Yuan introduced new circumstances into scholarly identities. The foreign dynasty had little regard for scholars. It dispensed with the imperial examinations for forty years before reviving them in 1315. When it did, it put Daoxue at the heart of the examination syllabus.

The first five chapters of the book lay out the argument that I take pains to summarize in a bare outline, but chapter six wanders beyond the realm of the literati into society at large. The passage from one to the other is enabled by the existence of a large number of genealogy prefaces found among the writings of Southern Song and Yuan authors, Wuzhou ones included. Obviously, prefaces were written because genealogies were being compiled. Occasionally, prefaces were written for genealogies in which the authors might find their own descent lines. More often, they were written in response to requests from non-relatives. Typically, preface writers extolled the virtues of genealogy compilation and related that activity to their scholarly orientations. Nevertheless, they make up a biased sample of how genealogies might have been looked upon by society at large—authors invited to write prefaces must have been known to be supportive of lineages compiling genealogies.

Bol says enough to show that the scholars might have welcomed, but did not drive, the enthusiasm for compiling genealogies. At most, by the fourteenth century, they generated the “new public rhetoric in which the genealogy and the lineage were put in

service of an intellectual and social agenda” (214). That they did by providing the moral, cultural, and political arguments for building lineages and compiling genealogies.

I wish Bol had taken his argument further by fleshing out the history of lineage building in Wuzhou. Although by the eighteenth century written genealogies became commonplace in much of China, during exactly the lifetimes of the “four masters,” the compilation of those documents was only just beginning and Wuzhou was a pioneer. Two technological inventions came together to make that possible: representing descent as a multi-line chart and estimating the size of land plots based on their shapes. The one allowed the genealogy to be represented as a “tree” rather than a paragraph within a biography, and the other for a cadastral record to be compiled that might associate the name of an owner with a plot of land of known size. With those inventions, it became possible to think of more or less complete records of descendants and land holdings, whether or not completeness was achieved in reality. Bol describes that change as a shift from concern primarily for bio-data (such as names, birth, and death dates) to the addition of essays written by or recording the “public life of family members” (209), which accords with his argument that the genealogy became a public document, but that rather understates what the documentation reveals.

Recording descendants and landholdings came together in the Southern Song government’s efforts to register land in order to facilitate the collection of taxes, a process referred to as “demarcating the boundaries” (*jingjie* 经界). The policy was decreed in 1142 and introduced in Zhejiang a few years later. It then lapsed and was revived in Wuzhou in 1217. Its impact is reflected in some of the genealogy prefaces that Bol cites.

For instance, Bol discusses at length two prefaces from a genealogy of the Lü 吕 surname of Taiping precinct (*Taiping Lüshi zongpu* 太平吕氏宗谱) in Yongkang 永康 county, written by Lü Hao 吕皓 in 1194 and Lü Pu 吕溥 in 1346 (209–213). Details aside, the 1194 preface was written exactly for a genealogy chart (hence its title, *Benzhi tu xu* 本支图序). The preface does not tell us what the chart might have looked like, but versions of the chart extended to incorporate subsequent generations are available in extant genealogies and they show that the lineage traced descent only from Hao’s great, great grandfather. A single son is noted for each of the next two generations until, by Hao’s father’s generation, three lines of descent were traced. Lü Pu came five generations after Hao, being the great, great grandson of Hao’s nephew. Pu acknowledges that the chart had been started by Hao and kept up by Hao’s son and other people, and that by his own time it included 800 names. The earlier preface, therefore, essentially provided a genealogy chart for an extended five-generation family, and the latter for a lineage that consisted of at least ten generations.

The two essays show how rapidly the lineage building movement unfolded under the twin influence of the multi-line genealogy chart and land registration. To put that into context, we have to look at the history of lineage building by Lü Hao and his descendants. Lü Hao was himself a forceful lineage builder. In 1192, his father had passed all the family land possessions on to him and his two brothers. In 1194, the year that Hao wrote the preface, his father died. Hao made a clear record of each plot (“so that land would not leak out of any household and tax would not be hidden in any land holding” [户无漏田, 田无匿税]) and, with his brothers’ support, he invested the entire inheritance into a lineage estate (*yizhuang* 义庄). Setting up the lineage estate by keeping a record of each plot of land that was owned must be read in the light of the government’s efforts to compile the land cadastre and, by no accident, Hao was a leader in the execution of that policy in Yongkang county. He wrote an essay to record its history, and

the epitaph of his nephew Zhu 祿, who was likewise involved in the exercise, notes that “generally speaking, of the seven counties in Wuzhou, [land measurement] began in Yongkang, and, within the ten precincts [*xiang* 乡] of Yongkang, it began in Taiping, and of the four and a half districts [*du* 都] of Taiping, it began at the Seventeenth District where the gentleman lived.” Also noted in Zhu’s epitaph, the management regulations of the lineage estate were presented to the county government “to demonstrate permanence” (*yi shi bu bian* 以示不变). As the government attempted, in stops and starts, to construct a cadastre, Yongkang landowners had learnt to measure land plot by plot, so that by 1217 they were able to turn registration to their advantage. Establishing lineage estates in Yongkang in the thirteenth century was part of this drive towards defining land ownership under the rubric of government tax registration. Maintaining a lineage chart was necessary, especially for members of minor branches. When descendants numbered in the hundreds, how else might Lü Pu demonstrate he was entitled to the lineage estate?¹

A similar story may be told about Wang Bo’s “Chart of the Single Origin of the Wang Lineage” (王氏一原图 *Wangshi yiyuan tu*) written in 1244, which Bol discusses briefly (216). Wang Bo was one of the “four masters,” and it may be noted that the chart, with lineage biographies, was presented to Wuzhou Prefect, Zhao Ruteng 赵汝腾, in the same year as it was written. Zhao left an essay recording the event and commented on Wang’s presentation. He wrote: “A lineage that does not have a chart does not know the order of its descent lines, and how would a chart without the biographies convey the details of the achievements of each generation?”² Also in 1244, Zhao Ruteng commended He Ji, another one of the “four masters” to the imperial court (130). The prefect’s comments would have been designed to recognize the authority of Wang Bo’s genealogy.

However, Wang Bo’s lineage had relied not on a written genealogy but on an annual lineage gathering to affirm its continuation. Bo’s second cousin, Bi 必, recorded in 1197 that for many years the lineage had gathered on the first day of every lunar month for a meeting during which members paid respect first to the founding ancestor (*shizu* 始祖), then the first-to-settle ancestors, and then individually to their elders. Bi noted that a three-page record of those gatherings had existed, hence the title of his essay: “Preface to the Record of Collected Gatherings” (*Huibai lu xu* 会拜录序). Those meetings continued, as we know from a preface to the same record that Bo wrote in 1269.³

Bi was Bo’s contemporary, even though, in lineage terms, he was one generation Bo’s junior. Bi’s father would have fallen within the five-generation mourning grade with Bo, as they shared the same great, great grandfather. Bi, coming a generation later, would have fallen outside it. Bi’s immediate family, however, was much more distinguished than Bo’s. Bi’s father, uncle, and grandfather all held office. Bo’s grandfather was a *jinshi*, but Bo was known primarily for his scholarship. Given this context, an essay written by Bi in 1250 titled, “A Preface on the Foundation Record of Various Graves” (*Zhuying zhenji xu* 诸茔砧基序) is particularly interesting. The term “foundation record” (*zhenji*

¹*Taiping Lüshi zongpu* 太平吕氏宗谱 (1821), 20/遗德 yide/14a–15b; Lü Hao 吕皓, *Yunxi gao* 云谿稿 (1924), in *Congshu jicheng xubian* 丛书集成续编 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1989), 32–433, 436–437. The translated text reads: 大凡婺七邑始永康, 永康十乡始太平, 太平四都有半, 始十七都, 君所居也。

²*Fenglin Wangshi Yiyuan zongpu* 凤林王氏一原宗谱 (1888), 1/14a–15a. Original text: 族而无图不足知宗系之次, 图而不谱又何以悉世泽之详?

³*Fenglin Wangshi Yiyuan zongpu*, 1/8a–b.

砧基) refers to a private record of land measurement using the principles advocated in the government cadastral exercise. The essay records the history of the lineage up to the seventh generation, giving the locations of relevant ancestral graves. After that, it gives the reason why a record of land was needed:

Earlier, in the Jiading period [1208–1224], in consideration of official policies, and for fear that other people might infringe upon us by cunning means, we did not set up a headman in charge of grave observances. We divided [responsibilities for] the graves and handed out certificates for different people [in the lineage] to manage them. In time, we suffered bad consequences. Having discussed and agreed to choose the grave of the seventh-generation ancestor as the [registered] acreage, we shall carve on stone the origin [of the decision] as well as the foundation record, report to the government, calculate what might be taxable annually, and pay accordingly. We will set aside land for those expenses and spread [the obligations among] members of the lineage, so that descendants may hold on to [the graves] generation after generation.⁴

To summarize, in the 1210s or 1220s, a lineage that had met regularly for sacrifice to ancestors recorded land plots associated with graves and assigned responsibilities over respective graves to members of the lineage, but it did that without reporting to the government. By 1244, Wang Bo, coming from a junior branch, gained sufficient recognition to draw up a genealogy chart and present it to the prefect. By 1250, a record of the grave land that might be the basis for tax calculations was engraved on stone by a powerful branch. It was mooted that some land might be set aside to pay the tax (or, more likely, service levies) allocated on it. Wang Bo might have written about “oneness of coherence” (Bol’s translation for *li* 理) in his preface. He could hardly have been ignorant of the power game behind genealogical charts.

The fall of the Southern Song to the Yuan brought about destruction, including destruction of records, but some trends that began from the last decades of the Song continued. The Yuan government attempted at various times to construct a tax cadaster (169). The application of the genealogical chart to tracking descent became commonplace. Prefaces sought from reputable scholars became formulaic, although every now and then it is still possible to detect background circumstances leading to genealogical compilation. Dai Liang’s 戴良 preface for the Zhang 章 surname (216) was written for a genealogical chart compiled by Zhang Yi 章溢, one of the few Wuzhou men, along with Song Lian 宋濂, who surrendered to Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 in 1360 (230). Song Lian also wrote a preface (not cited by Bol). Unfortunately, many of the prefaces that Bol cites for the Yuan are taken from essay collections associated with the authors rather than extant versions of the genealogies. Essay collections might have provided the literary contexts for their writing, but it should not be missed that local contests for power and property were no less acute during the Yuan than in the Southern Song.

I point out the incongruence between words and deeds not to dispute but to affirm Bol’s thesis. His tireless summaries of the words and brevity on the deeds, however, may give the opposite impression. Nevertheless, consider what Bol actually says when he contrasts Lü Zuqian and Zhang Mao 章懋, the Ming dynasty successor in the Wuzhou Daoxue tradition: “Lü produced numerous works on the Classics, histories,

⁴Fenglin Wangshi *Yiyuan zongpu*, 1/not paginated. This is the text: 先是嘉定间，扞量官司，虑人诡挟，禁弗使立瞻莹正，分入众位，给由收掌。岁久，寔有后患。众议克合，乃以七世之塚，眠厥亩步，率彼元由，立石砧基，而白于有司，纽计官物，岁考成数而输焉。置田充费，且兑鸠率，俾子孙得以世守。

and literature; Zhang produced none. Lü was creating a curriculum; Zhang worked within the received curriculum of Zhu Xi learning and literary composition. But Zhang had something that Lü did not yet have: a history of literati learning in Wuzhou in Song and Yuan” (246–47). But may I add that Lü also had an intellectual environment that allowed him to innovate, which Zhang did not have? How did that environment change? Bol actually has an answer. In a summary of the changes introduced by Ming Taizu, too long to quote in full, Bol argues that the Ming government sought to reach directly into the villages through tax and ritual policies, and that left the educated dependent on the examination system for their recognized status (235–39). He concludes: “There was a place for literati as part of the system but not as a community of quasi-independent actors” (239). And what was that place? Bol asserts: “The literati thought of themselves as the *shi* [士] and thus as the national elite ... [But] it is more correct to say that the *shi* were *a* national elite rather than *the* national elite, and, although many shared literati learning, they were in the first place a hereditary elite” (272, italics in original). If Bol had delved more into the genealogies, he might have added that, like all hereditary elites, they grew wealthy from their political subordination. Zhang Yi, for whom Dai Liang wrote the lineage preface, would have been an apt example.

The last chapter is entitled “an ending and a beginning.” So Wuzhou Daoxue came to an end? Indeed, the “beginning,” heralded by Hu Yinglin 胡应麟, “broke with two great assumptions about learning: first, that the cultivation of the self was the goal, and, second, that intuiting or experiencing unity, integration, and coherence was evidence of true understanding and the mark of ultimate meaningfulness” (293). Hu’s books contributed to no less than a new model for learning, which Bol summarizes as (1) the empirical and broad study of the marginal; (2) scholarship as a collective enterprise; (3) creating histories of cumulative change; (4) establishing protocols of inquiry; and (5) distinguishing the real from the false (289–93). Such a program would have built connections to the future, but Bol cautions: “I am not arguing that he is important as a precursor to Qing Evidential Learning” (293). The end came with a whimper and the new beginning was not heralded by any bang.

This is an important book that needs to be read carefully, and sometimes, in between the lines. I must say I am somewhat surprised that, having come so close to the use of tables in the representation of ideas, a methodology that was advocated by Wang Bo (152–53), Bol misses the significance of the same approach in compiling lineage genealogies. Bol cites Michael Lackner in his reading of the use of charts and diagrams for the purpose of textual explication. The more relevant argument is found in the growing body of work on Chan Buddhist genealogies. This is what Charles D. Orzech says of them: “Constructed backwards from the present, the work of these lineages is two-fold: first, they monopolize power and authority in the present by cutting off multiple access points from the past ... Second, they channel relationships and claims of authority in the present among the various legitimate competing ‘branches’ by situating them in hierarchies based on filiation.”⁵ That neatly sums up the impact of lineage building on local society.

⁵Charles D. Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’ the Chinese appropriation of the Tantras, and the question of esoteric Buddhism,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34.1 (2006), 29–78 at 55.