

Where Does the Pleasure Boat Stop Next?—Tracing Li Dou’s Route Through Yangzhou in 1795

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Kde má výletná loď ďalšiu zastávku? Po stopách Li Douovej cesty po Yangzhou

Resumé Štúdiá analyzuje literárne dielo učenca Li Doua (?–1817) *Yangzhou huafang lu* (Yangzhouské výletné lode) z konca 18. storočia, v ktorom autor ponúka poetický a literárny opis východočínskeho obchodného a kultúrneho centra Yangzhou, odkiaľ pochádzal. Autorka štúdie ponúka detailné informácie o živote a diele Li Doua, detailne si všíma trasu, ktorú sleduje opis autora cez významné lokality v Yangzhou, ako sú zachytené v diele *Yangzhou huafang lu*. Kniha si v qingskej Číne získala veľkú popularitu a vyšla v niekoľkých edíciách.

Abstract The present study is an analysis of the literary work *Yangzhou huafang lu* (The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou; late 18th c.) by the scholar Li Dou (?–1817), providing a poetical and literary description of the eastern Chinese commercial and cultural centre Yangzhou from where he hailed. This study presents detailed information about the life and works of Li Dou and follows all traces of famous sites that are dealt with in *Yangzhou huafang lu*. The book was very popular in Qing China and saw several editions.

Keywords China, Literature, Qing dynasty · Travelogues · Li Dou (?–1817), *Yangzhou huafang lu* 揚州畫舫錄 (The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou; 1795).

During the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–95), Yangzhou 揚州, the prefectural city set on the north bank of Yangzi in Jiangsu province, enjoyed a period of peace, unprecedented economic prosperity and cultural prime, and ranked among prominent urban centers in China. Its ‘golden age’ was meticulously documented in a voluminous book titled The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou

(*Yangzhou huafang lu* 揚州畫舫錄), in eighteen chapters, written by a local scholar named Li Dou 李斗 (?–1817), and first published in 1795. Although other relevant sources have been preserved, it was this book that offered the most complex picture of the town in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and went far towards forming the image of Yangzhou as a delightful, wealthy and leisurely place.¹ Its text was also much longer, and had a larger scope than other books describing Chinese cities, throughout history. The book soon became popular among general readers, has been increasingly valued over the time by historians, and several times republished (see Plate 1).²

This article traces chapters one to sixteen of Li Dou's original text as they develop down the city and suburbs of Yangzhou.³ It seems obvious from the first glance at the contents—the chapters are named after districts and suburbs—that an imaginary route shaped the structure of the book. However, the route is neither straightforward, nor does it comply with the rules of urbanism; it seems to have been deliberately chosen. The aim of this article is to uncover the intention behind it, and to reveal the relation of the route to the meaning of the book. From the outcome, the route is the chief implement of how to tie together plentiful topics and myriad of facts dealt with. As one would expect, the topography and architecture of Yangzhou make up a significant part of the whole text. They are nevertheless juxtaposed with, and outnumbered by, descriptions of cultural events, entertainment and lifestyle. These events mostly took place at, and were connected to gardens, temples and marketplaces, which in turn could have been reached by, or observed from pleasure boats (*huafang* 畫舫); hence the title of the book. Last but not least, these events were carried out

- 1 In Antonia Finnane's phrasing, »the eighteenth century established a way of thinking about Yangzhou«; see Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou. A Chinese City, 1550–1850* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 296.
- 2 For a survey of the editions and printings of *Yangzhou huafang lu*, old and new, see Lucie Olivová, »Reminiscences from the “Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou”: a Book about a City«, *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Philologica* 1: *Orientalia Pragensia* 14 (2001), 142–146. Since then, an additional edition has been published (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2012), in simplified characters, with indices of personal names and place names, respectively.
- 3 The sixteen chapters form the text proper, while chapters 17 and 18 are supplements, one being a manual about garden architecture, and the other a list of actual pleasure boats' names with short comments.

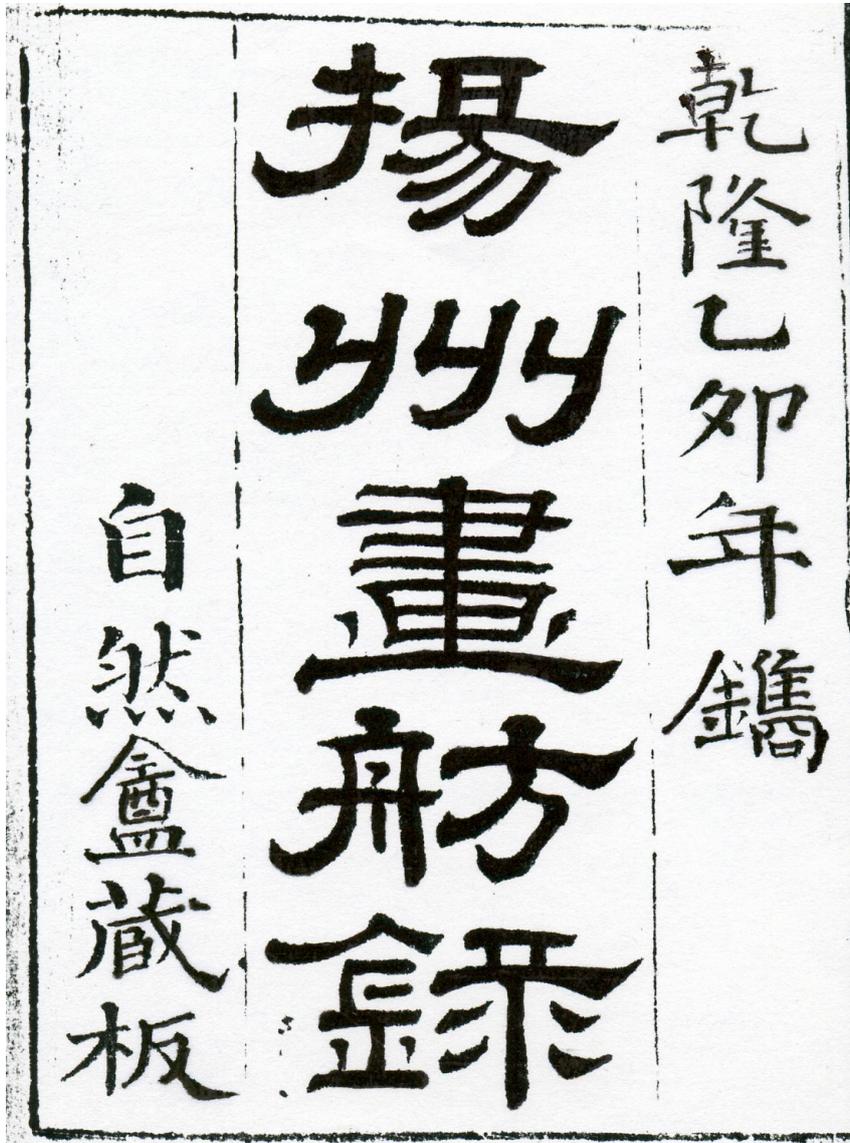


Plate 1

*Title Page of the First Edition of Yangzhou huafang lu (1795),
Reproduced from Li Dou's Collectanea Yongbaotang ji 永報堂集 (1807), vol. 3
(Special Collections, Fudan University Library, Shanghai, inv. no. 03244).*

by hundreds of men, who—in the author's own words—»were the woof« of the fabric he had woven.⁴

1 *About the Author*

Li Dou, *zi* Aitang 艾塘, was a native of Yizheng 儀征, a small town in Yangzhou prefecture. A holder of the first degree of the imperial examinations, he repeatedly failed the provincial examination. Later he chose to travel to distant provinces of China, and finally settled in Yangzhou in 1764, where he held the reputation of a scholar and poet, also skilled in mathematics and music. He was active as a playwright and song composer, and also participated in various projects, including a complete collection of local plays entitled *The Sea of Dramas* (*Qubai* 曲海),⁵ an editorial project carried out by the Censorial Bureau of Theatre (*Ciqu ju* 詞曲局)⁶ from 1778 to 1782; an anthology of contemporary poetry called *The Promising and Ingenious [Poets] of Huaihai* (*Huaihai yingling ji* 淮海英靈集), compiled by Ruan Yuan 阮元 in 1798; or the *Yangzhou Prefectural Gazetteer* (*Yangzhou fuzhi* 揚州府誌) published in 1810. His own writings were presented in *The Collected Writings from the Hall of Eternal Retribution* (*Yongbaotang ji* 永報堂集), published in 1804 in eight volumes, which not only include *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou*, but also his poetry (*shi* 詩, *ci* 詞 and *yuefu* 樂府), the two plays *The Story of Jupiter* (*Suixing ji* 歲星記), a comedy about the Han philosopher and jester Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (154–93 BCE), and *The Story of a Strange Misery* (*Qisuan ji* 奇酸記), based on an episode from *Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅 (16th c.).

Although regarded as a minor author in his age, Li Dou is still remembered thanks to *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou*. According to his Preface,⁷ he kept

4 Please see the excerpt on page 97.

5 This compendium has been lost, but its contents were recorded at the beginning of ch. 5 of *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou*. See Li Dou 李斗, *Yangzhou huafang lu* 揚州畫舫錄 [The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou] (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1977), 111–121. For more about Li Dou's involvement in the compilation of *Qubai*, see Lucie Olivová, »Li Dou and Theatre: The Case of an Eighteenth Century Yangzhou Playwright«, in *Chinese at Play: Festivals, Games and Leisure*, ed. by Anders Hansson, Bonnie S. McDougall and Frances Weightman (London: Paul Kegan, 2002), 109–136.

6 The Bureau of Theatre was established by the Salt Commissioner of Lianghuai, in order to record and censor the plays on the repertoire of Suzhou and Yangzhou theatrical troupes.

7 Li Dou, *Yangzhou huafang lu*, viii. A part of the preface is translated on page 97.

writing his *chef-d'œuvre* in the long period between 1764 and 1795. At the outcome, in 1765, the fourth imperial inspection tour to the south (*nanxun* 南巡) took place, and the emperor claimed that it would be his last tour.⁸ His claim appears to have been a key moment in the booming of private publishing, preceded and reinforced by the *Magnificent Canon of the Southern Tours* (*Nanxun shengdian* 南巡盛典), a massive 120 *juan* record commissioned by the emperor and published in 1771, which documented the first four Qianlong tours. Marking a commemorative 'ending' of the southern tours, it also spurred the local publication of a significant number of similar works describing gardens, temples as well as historical sites, which the emperor had visited. Li Dou began writing *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* at this time, and his book, or his motivations for writing it, can be considered as a part of the general trend.⁹

2 Route Itinerary

The first glance at the chapter titles suggests, as mentioned above, that the structure of *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* was topographical. The titles are all place names and can be easily arranged along an imaginary route, which moves by and through Yangzhou. Let us now take a closer look at this route and follow it on the maps of the city, which accompany this article.

- 8 Emulating his grandfather, Gaozong 高宗 travelled to the South six times, in 1751, 1757, 1762, 1765, 1780 and 1784, and visited Yangzhou on both the outward and return legs of each journey. Wu Jianhua 吳建華, »Nanxun jicheng« 南巡紀程 [Southern Journeys' Routes], *Fuyin baokan ziliao* 複印報刊資料 7/1990, 51–52.
- 9 The emergence of books on Yangzhou's history and culture in the following years may also be interpreted as »a phenomenon connected with [the city's] incipient decline [...] most easily recognized in the Jiaqing 嘉慶 reign (1796–1820)«. See Kim Karlsson, *Luo Ping. The Life, Career and Art of an Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painter* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 112.

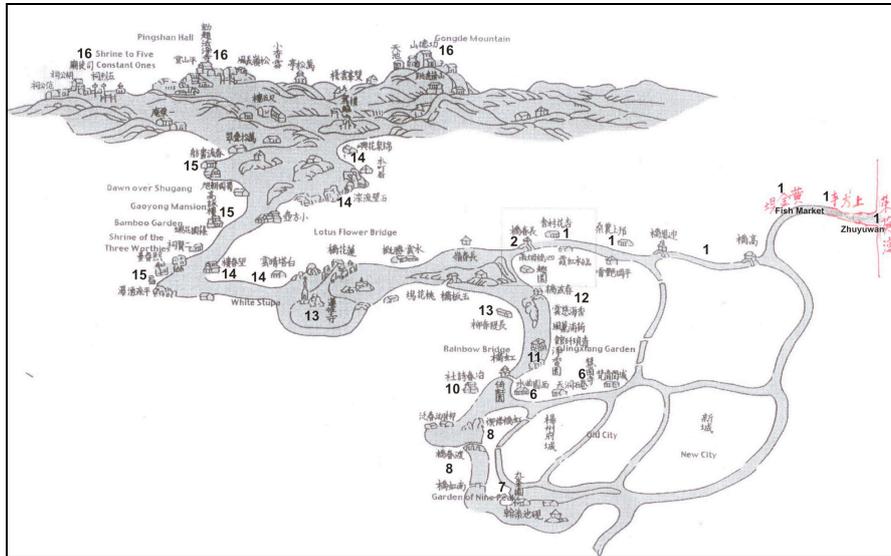


Plate 2

Map of Yangzhou

With Numerals Referring to Respective Chapters in Yangzhou huafang lu—
Adapted from Yangzhou, ed. by Yangzhou shiwei xuanchuanbu 揚州市委宣傳部
 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1980), n.p.

Li Dou and his readers set off from the small port of Zhuyuan 茱萸灣, lying ten kilometers away at the junction of the Caohe 草河 (also 漕河) and the Old Canal (Guyunhe 古運河). This was one of the access paths to Yangzhou, and also the place wherefrom the Qianlong emperor's fleet approached the city on his inspection tours. Li Dou witnessed the splendid imperial arrival in the spring of 1765 and rendered it in the opening pages of his book. The intention behind such a beginning is evident: to express his loyalty to the dynasty and his admiration for the emperor, and appropriate for his own book some of the grandeur of the latter.

The first stop is made at the Upper-Realm Monastery (Shangfang si 上方寺), located five kilometers north-east of the city wall. Here, on a newly built embankment where the emperor landed, the textual journey of *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* begins. The next major stops of chapter 1, still relatively far away from the city, are successively Dawang temple 大王廟, Huangjin dam 黃金壩 the imperial park between Gao and Yin'en bridges (高橋, 迎恩橋), then the gardens in the vicinity of Small Golden Hill (Xiao Jinshan 小金山), and finally

the scenic spots and villages located along Han Canal (Hangou 邗溝).¹⁰ This chapter is quite long, covering over twenty-seven pages of the modern edition. Chapter 2 is set at the Peach Flower Monastery (Taohua'an 桃花庵), beyond Changchun bridge 長春橋. Both chapters proceed from east to west along the Caohe, one of the main local main waterways whose name they bear, moving across the area outside the north wall of the town.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 share the title The North Side of the New City (《Xincheng bei》新城北). It ought to be mentioned that historic Yangzhou was divided in two parts. The Old City (Jiucheng 舊城) covered roughly one third of the full layout, and was surrounded by walls built under the Song and Yuan dynasties. The New City (Xincheng 新城), twice its size, spread spontaneously to the east. The walls on its remaining three sides were constructed in 1556, as a protection against pirates. In chapter 3, the reader finally enters Yangzhou through Bianyi Gate (Bianyimen 便益門), located in the north-east corner. Passing three temples and a fish-market, he arrives to the next gate, Guangchumen 廣儲門, and remains outside the walls. By this gate, there stood the renowned Plum Flower Academy (Meihua shuyuan 梅花書院). Next to it was the memorial to general Shi Kefa 史可法 (1601–1645), who defended Yangzhou against the Manchus in May 1645 to the very bitter end.¹¹ Chapter 4 dwells around Imperial Gate (Gongchenmen 拱宸門): the main sites are the large Buddhist temples Heavenly Tranquility Monastery (Tianningsi 天寧寺, inside the gate) and Double Peace Monastery (Chongningsi 重寧寺, outside the gate), their construction history, layout, and shrines, some with detailed descriptions of inventories.¹² The closing section is about the busy Fengle Street 丰樂街 (nicknamed the Shopping Street, Maimaijie 買賣街), specializing in food.¹³ Chapter 5 lingers on at the Heavenly Tranquility Monastery.

Central to chapter 6, North Side of the [Old] City (《Chengbei lu》城北錄), are the enchanting gardens built there one after another by rich salt merchants. Chapter 7 has a complementary title, South Side of the [Old] City (《Chengnan

10 References taken from The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou will not always be made to pages, but to the paragraphs numbered by Wang Beiping 汪北平 in the modern editions printed by Zhonghua shuju (Beijing, 1960, 1997, 2004) or Shijie shuju (Taipei, 1977). My notes indicate the number of the chapter (*juan* 卷), followed by the paragraph in square brackets. For the sites just mentioned see Li Dou, *Yangzhou huafang lu*, 1 [4f], [18], [20], [25], [30f], [43f] respectively.

11 *Ibid.*, 3 [8] and [73].

12 *Ibid.*, 4 [8] and [45], respectively.

13 *Ibid.*, 4 [60–66].

lu« 城南錄), but begins as far south as the Yangzi River bank and the Guazhou 瓜洲 fortress, which in fact lies outside Yangzhou prefecture. The description follows a northward direction, presumably along the Old Canal towards the city, passing on the way Heaven's Compassion Monastery (Gaominsi 高旻寺), with the imperial lodge (*xinggong* 行宮).¹⁴ The description of the southern city wall, with its five gates, comes next, then the sites on the outskirts beyond the Southern Gate (Nanmen 南門), including the famous Nine Peaks Garden (Jiufengyuan 九峰園). Except for Guandi Temple (Guandimiao 關帝廟), all these sites lie outside the city wall. In a similar vein, chapter 8 dwells on the outer side of the western city wall. The main themes are the Water-Reflection Garden (Yingyuan 影園) and the Garden of Repose (Xiuyuan 休園),¹⁵ both built by the Zheng 鄭 family a century earlier.¹⁶ The second half of the chapter¹⁷ describes the waters, rice fields, temples and bridges in the vicinity and mentions the people who lived there, among whom the eccentric painter Li Shan 李鱗 (1686–ca 1756).¹⁸ Chapters 7 and 8 are relatively short, the first slightly exceeding thirteen pages, while the second is made up by less than eleven.

14 Heaven's Compassion Monastery, once a major site and one of the 'eight great temples of Yangzhou', was favored by Kangxi 康熙 (*reg* 1662–1722) who donated a gilded statue of Buddha in 1703. The emperor stayed in the lodge when he stopped in Yangzhou on his 3rd, 4th and 5th Southern journeys (*naxun* 南巡), in 1699, 1703 and 1705, respectively, arriving in Yangzhou from the south. The site was almost completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, leaving only foundations of the Tianzhong Pagoda 天中塔, of the main Golden Buddha Sanctuary 金佛殿, and of the Kangxi stele. Monks came back in 1985, and in 2000, the temple and the pagoda were partly rebuilt. A school now occupies the grounds of the imperial lodge. See Liu Lu 劉潞, »Yangzhou Gaominsi« 揚州高旻寺 [The Gaomin Temple in Yangzhou], *Zijincheng* 紫禁城 2 (1987), 21–22. Qianlong stayed there on his 5th tour in 1780.

15 Li Dou, *Yangzhou buafang lu*, 8 [1], [5, in the latter part].

16 The Zhengs originated from Huizhou 徽州 where the main, albeit scanty family line still resided. It all started in 1624 when the twenty-year-old Zheng Jinglian 景濂 moved to Yangzhou. He made fortune in the salt trade and his posterity also; his grandsons built splendid gardens, including the Water-Reflection Garden, supposedly named by Dong Qichang 董其昌 on the occasion of his visit. By the end of the 17th century, not a few sons of this family passed the second, and even the third examination round. After 1765, the family's fortune declined. Their whereabouts after the Qianlong era are uncertain. Basically, most of chapter 8 of *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* is about Zheng gardens and Zheng family members.

17 *Ibid.*, 8 [13–27].

18 *Ibid.*, 8 [20].

Chapter 9, titled Little Qinhuai (《Xiao Qinhuai lu》小秦淮錄), is the only chapter which remains fully inside the city walls, mapping an area which, as a matter of fact, was larger than the merry quarter itself. The starting point of this wandering is the Lesser East Gate (Xiao Dongmen 小東門). First providing a brief history of the construction of this part of Yangzhou, and delineating it with gates and custom-houses of the Old and New Cities, Li Dou then records the layout and length of the streets, the names of the temples and the location of the administrative offices and academies (paragraphs 2–12), as well as the layout of canals, navigable or not (paragraphs 13–15). The author not only relied on his knowledge of the place, but also consulted a map, as acknowledged at the beginning of the chapter. It was a detailed map of both Yangzhou cities, Old and New, drawn by Liu Maoji 劉茂吉 (dates unknown), a native of Anhui, in 1765.¹⁹

Li Dou did not fail to supply information about shopping: the main fashion streets were Satin street (Duanzi jie 緞子街) and Fashion accessories street (Cuihua jie 翠花街), while refreshments could be bought on Lesser East Gate street (Xiao Dongmen jie 小東門街).²⁰ As elsewhere, he also wrote about the personalities who had resided there. Some possessed Bohemian characters, probably like himself—it is meaningful to learn that he, too, used to live there, in a dwelling called Hemp-Made Autumn House (Zhuqiuge 紵秋閣).²¹ The topographic part of the chapter concludes with pleasure boat piers, providing the number of boats at anchor and their size.²² The thematic core of this chapter—entertainment—comes next. The thirty pages of this chapter offered satisfaction to those readers who expected *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* to be a city guide.

Chapter 10 makes quite a contrast. It is centered on the pastime of the distinguished upper society: poetry and poetry gatherings. The tradition of the so called ‘purification ceremonies’ (*xiuqi* 修契) had been reopened by the poet and prefect Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711) who first organized them near the Rainbow Bridge (Hongqiao 虹橋), and eventually endowed Yangzhou with new importance of a trans-regional cultural site.²³ Much later, at the time Li Dou

19 *Ibid.*, 9 [1].

20 *Ibid.*, 9 [18], [24], [26], [27].

21 *Ibid.*, 9 [25].

22 *Ibid.*, 9 [28].

23 See chapter 2 in Tobie Meyer-Fong, *Building Culture in Early Qing Yangzhou* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 25–74.

could have remembered, another respected poet and the salt commissioner Lu Jianzeng 廬見曾 (1690–1768) continued to sanction literary gatherings. The text includes the indispensable descriptions of gardens, but gives even more space and weight to the literati circles surrounding the two famous poets,²⁴ and to their verses produced during the gatherings, or at other times. Chapter 10 covers thirty pages of the modern edition, and ranks as one of the two longest of the book, along with chapter 9. Nonetheless, it shares its title The Rainbow Bridge (Hongqiao lu shang, xia 虹橋錄上、下) with chapter 11. The bridge can be found beyond the north-west corner of the city wall, at the mouth of Slim West Lake (Shou Xihu 瘦西湖). Chapter 11 unravels along the waters of this lake, pointing out the facilities on its banks, teahouses, snacks, etc.²⁵

Chapter 12, titled East of the [Rainbow] Bridge («Qiaodong lu» 橋東錄), wanders around the lake, stopping at some of the celebrated gardens of rich salt merchants, such as Pure Fragrance Garden (Jingxiangyuan 淨香園) of Jiang Chun 江春 (1720–1789), or Mist and Rain Over Four Bridges (Siqiao yanyu 四橋煙雨) of Huang Lǔxian 黃履暹 (dates unknown).²⁶ Both were honoured by a visit of the Qianlong emperor. The descriptions of the gardens are interspersed with short entries devoted to a number of relatives and visitors of the owners. Chapter 13, titled «West of [Rainbow] Bridge» (Qiaoxi lu 橋西錄), surveys Slim West Lake from the garden Spring Willows on a Long Dike (Changti chunliu 長提春柳) onward. The text then describes in detail Small Golden Mountain, already mentioned in chapter 1. But whereas in that former chapter it marked the end of a route, here it figures as the beginning of another, leading to Jade Bridge, Fishing Terrace, Guandi Temple, Lotus Mind Temple (Lianxingsi 蓮性寺) with its emblematic White Pagoda, the Memorial Shrine of Lord Hao 郝, East Garden, and, finally, Five-Pavilion Bridge.²⁷ Many of these sites still exist and became the celebrated destinations of sightseeing in today's Yangzhou.

Chapters 14 and 15 depict the gardens along New Canal (Xinhe 新河) leading to Level Mountain Hall (Pingshantang 平山堂). This canal was developed in 1759 by commissioner Gao Heng 高恆 (d1768) and the building of gardens along the banks was prompted by Qianlong's visits to Yangzhou. Some

24 They are presented in Li Dou, *Yangzhou buafang lu*, 10 [8], [38] respectively. Short biographies of their acquaintances and guests follow in [9–37] and [40–68].

25 *Ibid.*, 11 [32–34].

26 *Ibid.*, 12 [1–18] [68–84] respectively. A passage about Jiang Chun appears in [19] and one about the Huang brothers in [85].

27 *Ibid.*, 13 [39], [40], [43] [41–48], [49–50], [52], [54–60] and [117], respectively.

places were voluptuous, but quite a few were relatively plain. Named East Bank of [the Canal Leading to Shu]gang (Gangdong lu 岡東錄), chapter 14 describes the sights on that bank of the canal, while chapter 15 provides information on its west bank (Gangxi lu 岡西錄). Both proceed northwards, making stops at various gardens, among which [Water] Flows Purling Down the Stone-Wall (Shibi liucong 石壁流淙) and Brocade Fountain on a Flowering Island (Jinquan huayu 錦泉華嶼) are described at length.²⁸ The eye-catching spot on the map is the Twenty-Four Bridges (Ershisi qiao 二十四橋), located at the right-angle turn where the direction of the canal changes from west to north. Another site worth mentioning is Dwarf-Bamboo Garden (Xiaoyuan 筱園), a large garden with many different species of plants.²⁹ The next stop is made at the Shrine of the Three Worthies (Sanxian ci 三賢祠), celebrating Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007 to 1072), Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) and Wang Shizhen, and set on the grounds of this same garden.³⁰ Descriptions of other gardens and of their owners follow, but their names are not relevant here.

Chapter 16, the final chapter, is entitled Shugang Range (Shugang lu 蜀岡錄) and starts by expounding on the topography of the area, which was obviously very different from the walled city of Yangzhou, located four kilometers to the south-east. The major sites here were Mountain of Merits (Gongde shan 功德山), commonly called Guanyin Mountain 觀音山, Level Mountain Hall, West Garden (Xiyuan 西園) with the Fifth Water-Spring (Diwu quan 第五泉), the Grave of the Five Chaste [Ladies] (Wulie mu 五烈墓),³¹ and more small temples and graves on Western Peak (Xifeng 西峰).³² Li Dou recounts folktales and legends about some of these places, for example the story of one of the chaste ladies who happened to live in Yangzhou itself, on East Customhouse Street (Dongguan jie 東關街).³³ It almost seems as if he unwittingly bid the reader to return from the hills to the town. Similarly, at the end of the description of the shrine at Situ Temple (Situmiao 司徒廟) on Western Peak, he explains how to get back to Twenty-Four Bridges, closer to the city.³⁴

28 *Ibid.*, 14 [11, 16–18, 23], and [36–46] respectively.

29 *Ibid.*, starting at 15 [8].

30 *Ibid.*, 15 [23].

31 In Finnane's translation 'Shrine to the Five Constant Ones'. See Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou*, 196.

32 Li Dou, *Yangzhou bufang lu*, 16 [5], [28], [36–38], [41], [45], respectively.

33 *Ibid.*, 16 [42].

34 *Ibid.*, 16 [45].

The outcome of the journey is not a sinuous line across or around the city, as one would expect after connecting the names of the chapters on a map. The route was here and there interrupted, and did not always follow the same direction: chapters 7 and 8 go forth and back, and chapter 9 shoots forth from Lesser East Gate into the New and Old Cities. Several chapters are presented in complimentary pairs, at least as far as their titles are concerned (chapters 1 & 2, 10 & 11, 12 & 13, 14 & 15), thus infusing the text with a certain rhythm. Some come in groups of three (chapters 3 to 5 and chapters 6 to 8), and two are singular (chapters 9 and 16). The length of the chapters is uneven, ranging from thirty pages or a few less of the modern edition (chapters 1, 9, 10, 13) to fifteen pages or a few more (chapters 6, 11, 12, 15), the shortest having only eleven pages (chapters 8, 14). In terms of the aesthetics of symmetry and harmony, this may be regarded as a deficiency in the overall structure of the book. There is nonetheless an obvious reasoning behind Li Dou's progress through Yangzhou. He skillfully likened his journey to a painting scroll, with the climax set at halfway mark. Indeed, *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* is reminiscent of the composition of the *Qingming shanghe tu* 清明上河圖, the famous scroll depicting the Song capital Bianliang 汴梁 during the Qingming Festival, or of similar scrolls. As if drawn into the scene, the viewer arrives by boat at the outskirts of the urban area and proceeds through lively villages in the direction of the city (chapter 1). The climax is reached approximately in the middle of the scroll, corresponding with the busy city center, entered in the middle of the book (chapter 9). Finally one leaves the bustling urban world through a gate and everything calms down peacefully, the momentum soothes while one moves away to the suburban gardens and further in the remote wilderness (chapter 16).

3 *Warp and Woof: The Themes*

Although *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* seems to be topographically structured, the chapters do not merely describe places and their history, but systematically introduce their inhabitants, their former and contemporary occupants and sometimes add anecdotes about them. After all, in his foreword, Li Dou writes: »[...] places are the warp, people and their stories are the woof« (*yi di wei jing, yi renwu jishi wei wei* 以地為經，以人物記事為緯).³⁵ His book can certainly

35 *Ibid.*, viii. All quotations from *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* in this article are translated by the present author.

serve as a city guide, but it is also quite useful as a Who-is-Who of Yangzhou—without the name index, though. As many as 1,700 personal names are mentioned in its pages. The number is impressive, but not all names belong to people who contributed to Yangzhou's history. Some of them were mere visitors who gathered in a specific site on a certain occasion. Many were only minor personalities, or quite ordinary people. Here is an example:

A local old man Zhou once had a field of a few *mu*, with a domicile of a few buildings. It lay next to the [Bewitching Spring Poetic Society (*Yechun shishe* 冶春詩社)] garden. Hence, a certain Mr Tian bought it for cash, and would not sell it again, since he intended to be a gardener in his own garden and to plant flowers and to breed goldfish. His son [nicknamed] Button mastered Ye Meifu's method of planting chrysanthemums, which is regarded as the utmost technique.^[36] For this garden, there were entrance tickets, three inches long and two inches wide. They were printed on a colored decorative paper. On the top was printed the year, the month and the date when the gardener swept the paths and opened the door [for the visitors], and along the side was stamped »The Hut West of the [Rainbow] Bridge«. ³⁷

More importantly still, the text frequently plunges into diversions and deflections, which were not connected to the particular site, but to certain themes it had generated. The section on 'bamboo branch songs' (*zhuzhi ci* 竹枝詞) offers an adequate example. The paragraph begins with the description of the garden of the Fei 費 family, followed by a brief presentation of a few members of that family—their names and a few facts about them. One of them, Fei Xuan 費軒 (*zi* Zhiyu 執御), was the author of the then very popular song *Fragrant Dreams*, *Mengxiang ci* 夢香詞.³⁸ Li Dou takes up the occasion to name all the other bamboo branch songs popular at the time—all those he knew of. In several instances throughout the book, he proceeds in a similar way, picking up a topic and untying a string of correlated notions. In some cases, the particularities of a

36 Ye Meifu is presented in the following paragraph, i.e. 10 [90]. He earned the bachelor degree in the official examinations, before devoting himself to cultivating chrysanthemum species. They were admired for their diversity of colors.

37 土人周叟，有田數畝，屋數椽，與園為鄰。田氏以金購之，弗肯售，願為園丁於園內種花養魚。其子扣子，得葉霖夫養菊法，稱絕技。是園有園票，長三寸，寬二寸，以五色花箋印之，上刻年月日園丁掃徑開門，旁鈐“橋西草堂”印章。 *Yangzhou huafang lu*, 10 [89]. It is not clearly stated whether the tickets were commemorative, or receipts of an entrance fee, as is common today.

38 *Ibid.*, 3 [75].

topic may well exceed the boundaries of the site being described. For example, when Li Dou describes the Plum Blossom Academy (Meihua shuyuan 梅花書院), he uses the occasion to mention all the other academies in Yangzhou, regardless of their location.³⁹ As a result, the exceptional quantity of data found in *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* is not scattered, but usually conveniently gathered together.

Among the most prominent themes treated in the book one naturally finds the gardens and the evolving garden landscape. Descriptions of gardens, interspersed with verses, can be found in every chapter, and especially in chapters 2, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15. Li Dou also thoroughly discusses theatrical and other performances (chapters 5, 9, 11), painters and calligraphers (chapter 2), the imperial southern tours (chapters 1, 4, 7), poetry (chapter 10), the history of Yangzhou (in several chapters), folktales and legends (chapter 16), religion (in several chapters), popular culture (chapter 16), and many more topics. Complying with these topics, distinct literary genres were used, among which descriptions of gardens, and other sites should be singled out first; second, biographical entries, third, anecdotes and other narrations, fourth, verses, including parallel couplets embezzling doorways, as well as whole poems, and fifth, short travelogues.

It soon becomes quite clear that topography was not the author's single concern, at times not even his main concern. True, topography serves as the underlying structure of the book, and every chapter starts with a description of a certain place. As Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) stated in his Preface: »[Li Dou] took the *Book of the Waterways* [*Shuijing zhu* 水經注] as an example, divided the land and recorded [everything]« (*fang Shuijingzhu zhi li, fen qi di er zai zhi* 仿水經注之例·分期地而載之).⁴⁰ In due time, the text switches subject: specific themes are systematically developed, stemming either from a given person and his abilities or from a site where a certain kind of activity used to take place. This was the common and typical structural device of Li Dou's writing. The uneven length of the chapters, hinted to above as a structural deficiency in regard to the topographical dimension of the text, is partly due to the amount of material he could gather on each respective topic. And it might be worth underlining yet again that these themes, some of them relatively expanded, are the elements that hold the text together, saving it from the dispersion characteristic of most miscellaneous notes (*biji* 筆記).

39 *Ibid.*, 3 [8].

40 *Ibid.*, p. iv.

Because of their value as historical sources, the themes that can be found in *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* will be briefly summarized. In the long first chapter, they are quite diversified, ranging from the imperial southern tours and the building of the Han canal under the kingdom of Wu 吳 to topics as ordinary as a fish-market (on the Huangjin Dam), Han bronzes, mathematics, crickets, public baths, teahouses, dye-works, etc.⁴¹ In chapter 2, Li Dou explores the Peach Flower monastery. The text here is static, as it does not proceed along any route and as little action takes place. It concludes with the spirits haunting the monastery, among them the spirit of abbot Shizhuang 石莊 (d1732). Since he also was a recognized artist, Li Dou consequently enumerates the many painters and calligraphers active in Yangzhou, leaving to posterity an invaluable source for the study of Chinese art.⁴² Apart from the artists' names and their origins, he also provides a brief account of their achievements, followed by the names of their sons. As one might expect, biographical material in the other chapters is also handled in this manner. For example:

Luo Pin, styled Liangfeng, nicknamed The Monk from the Temple of Flowers, began to study [the painting of] plum flowers with Jin Shoumen. Later, he imitated the style of old Taoist and Buddhist images. He painted *The Amusement with Ghosts* and became famous. He married Fang Bailian and had two sons, Yunshao and Yunzuan. All of them were skilled painters.⁴³

The major themes of chapter 3 are the academies and schools of Yangzhou, and the famous scholars attached to these institutions.⁴⁴ The other topics do not relate to them, and were recorded because of their connection with the locality. They are cases of filial piety,⁴⁵ the building of Shi Kefa's memorial temple,⁴⁶ and

41 *Ibid.*, 1 [10], [15], [20, 21], [32], [39], [41], and [48], respectively.

42 Painters are enumerated in *ibid.*, 2 [11–98], calligraphers in [99–148]. For a discourse on the art of portraiture, *chuanzhen* 傳真, see 2 [75], on pp. 47–48.

43 羅聘，字兩峰，號花之寺僧。初學金壽門梅花，後仿古仙佛畫法，有《鬼趣圖》，為世所稱。妻方白蓮，子允紹、允續，俱工畫。 *Ibid.*, 2 [70]. The nickname's correct order is *Huasi zhi seng*, see Karlsson, *Luo Ping*, 18. When naming, Li Dou used *hao* 號 instead of *ming* 名: Jin Shoumen is Jin Nong 金農 (1687–1763), Fang Bailian is Fang Wanyi 方婉義 (1732–1779).

44 *Ibid.*, 3 [19–67, 74].

45 *Ibid.*, [68–69]. They were recorded in painstaking detail, thus revealing a strong interest in this topic.

46 When addressing the case of Shi Kefa (*ibid.*, 3[73, 74]), Li Dou obviously wrote about anything but what today's reader would hope for, evading the tragic events of 1645, cautiously limiting himself to the trails of safe and innocent antiquarianism, and respectfully naming all the

finally, in sharp social contrast to the preceding lot, bamboo branch songs, and the breeding of gold fish.⁴⁷ Chapter 4, set around the Tianning temple, returns to imperial enterprises, namely to the Wenhui 文匯閣 library and the ‘Qianlong literary inquisition’, during which such book collections as those of the famous merchant and mercenary Ma 馬 brothers were requisitioned.⁴⁸ Entries about poets and scholars associated with Ma brothers follow. Chapter 5 is solely devoted to theatre, with descriptions of theatrical troupes and their administration, anecdotes about accomplished actors, a presentation of the instruments of an orchestra and a longish record of costumes and props.⁴⁹ This chapter contains another exquisite historic source, the lists of *zaju* 雜劇 from the imperial-commissioned collection *Qubai*, long lost.⁵⁰

Chapter 6 is devoted to Yangzhou’s famous gardens and their rich builders, mainly Huizhou 徽州 merchants, about whom Li Dou writes with a tint of sarcasm. He then devotes some space to the garden connoisseur Liu Dagan 劉大觀 and to his appraisal of the city’s gardens. Finally, he introduces the local scholar Wang Zhong 汪中 (1745–1794), quoting in full his Dialogue Concerning Guangling (*Guangling dui* 廣陵對), a long prosodic apotheosis of Yangzhou’s history.⁵¹ The main themes of chapter 7 are temples and gardens, namely Heaven’s Compassion Monastery (Gaominsi 高憫寺) and Nine Peaks Garden,⁵² etc. The accounts in chapter 8 also revolve around well-known gardens and their respective owners, as well as to poetry gatherings and their organizers.⁵³ Chapter 9, linked with the inner city, brings a sudden change, being a record of city entertainment, courtesans, music, story-telling, a female theatrical troupe,⁵⁴ and all sorts of festivities. It is concluded by a lengthy account of the origin of the place name Xiao Qinhuai 小秦淮.

contemporary high officials and poets who contributed to the building of the shrine.

47 *Ibid.*, [75], [76] respectively.

48 The inquisition is scrutinized in 4 [58]; the Ma brothers in 4 [12].

49 *Ibid.*, 5 [42] (orchestra), and [53] (props).

50 *Ibid.*, 5 [10–16]. On *Qubai*, see above note 3.

51 *Ibid.*, 6 [35], [39], [40]. Guangling is the historic name of Yangzhou. Wang Zhong’s poem occupies six pages of the modern edition.

52 *Ibid.*, 7 [3–6], [19–36] respectively.

53 For a Yangzhou poetry gathering, *ibid.*, 8 [6]; and for members of the Zheng 鄭 family who owned the gardens, [2–5, 7–12].

54 *Ibid.*, 9 [49].

The topics touched upon in chapter 10 bring the reader back to gardens, poetry and poets, among whom Wang Shizhen, Lu Jianzeng and many others appear. Li Dou quotes in full The Four Seven-Syllabic Verse Poems (《Qiyan lüshi sishou》七言律詩四首) and The Parting (《Liubie》留別) written by Lu Jianzeng, which must have been extremely popular at the time.⁵⁵ It is worth a comment that, whereas The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou is recognized as an excellent source for a variety of topics, the material on poetry it contains has remained relatively neglected. Chapter 11 is about all kinds of entertainment which could have taken place onboard of pleasure boats: performances, cuisine, singing, percussions, story-telling, chess, kites, acrobatics, arranging flowers and much more.⁵⁶ Descriptions of various gardens, inlaid with ‘biographies’ of many relatives and visitors of the owners, follow in chapters 12 to 15. Among the topics also treated in these chapters figure popular wine brands, the numerous scholars associated with East Garden (i.e. one of the gardens named Dongyuan 東園 in Yangzhou) and a collection of paired inscriptions (*duilian* 對聯) adorning it, the picking and gathering of herbs,⁵⁷ etc.

Having entered the wild natural environment in Shugang, more tombs, archways and shrines are encountered and described. The most dramatic historic account in The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou, by far the longest one and in fact unique in the whole book, is recorded in chapter 13 [52], as supplementary information to the Memorial Shrine of Hao Jingchun 郝景春 (*juren* 1612), a local official who led the defense of the nearby town of Huang’an against the rebel Luo Rucui 羅汝才 in 1637, during the twilight of the Ming dynasty. In the end, Huang’an was taken by the rebels and Hao Jingchun captured and executed.⁵⁸ The meticulous account of the fighting on the city walls is unlike any other part of the book, be it in subject or style. Several of the other tombs, arches and stelae were erected to the memory of filial sons and chaste widows, whose stories and merits are recounted, followed by a discussion on the validity of the title ‘chaste woman’ or, preferably, ‘chaste daughter’ (*zhennü* 貞女).⁵⁹

55 *Ibid.*, 10 [38].

56 *Ibid.*, 11 [4], [8–9, 49], [11, 15], [12], [17–19], [24], [26], [40], [29] respectively.

57 *Ibid.*, 13 [2], [61–114], [115], 15 [27], respectively. Gathering herbs is mentioned several times throughout the book.

58 *Yangzhou lishi renwu cidian* 揚州歷史人物辭典 [A Dictionary of Yangzhou Historic Personalities], ed. by Wang Cheng 王澄 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001), 599.

59 For the elite families in question, it was evidently a pressing matter to earn the title (*yuxuan* 與旋), and attain the honour for their daughter. The legitimacy of one such title is questioned. To

Finally, chapter 16 dwells on the grand birthday fairs at the Guanyin Mountain, with all kinds of folk games and popular entertainment; the history of Level Mountain Hall; and a longish entry on Hanlin academician Wang Maolin 汪懋麟 (1639–1688), one of those who had visited it.⁶⁰

As the preceding comments show, some of the many themes treated in the book were clearly linked to a locality or a site (first and foremost chapter 9), some less so (e.g. theatre in chapter 5), and some not at all (painting and calligraphy in chapter 2; the varied biographical data, etc.).

4 *Motion and Rest*

The text has thus both a topographic and a thematic content, intermingled to the extent that they cannot be separated.⁶¹ One would be compelled to regard topographic descriptions as the static aspects of the text, and the thematic accounts as the dynamic ones, but that simply does not always work. It is true that descriptions of places are prevailingly static, but sometimes they are set in motion; in such cases the feeling of motion is achieved by transition from one place to another. These descriptions, which may be labeled as dynamic topography, often link the author's route in-between his 'stops'. They are often short paragraphs periodically inserted into the flow of the text, such as the following example:

When grass grows, the area outside Southern Gate becomes pasture for horses and sheep. The road, which runs north from Old Ford Bridge, is the former Market Canal. The Garden of Water-Reflection used to lie on its west bank, now it has become the long islet on the lake. On the east bank, we take Southern Gate Street, pass through the Lane of the God of Wealth and arrive onto Jinghui Garden Road. Platform Lane runs over Fair Women Bridge and ends at South Red Bridge. Next comes Sweeping-Filth Hill Road, which leads to West Gate Street. All these [sites] are on the banks of Southern Lake.⁶²

resolve the problem, Li Dou quotes in full the Discourse on Female Chastity (《Zhen nü bian》 貞女辨) by Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763–1820). *Ibid.*, 15 [63].

60 *Ibid.*, 16 [5], [28] [32], respectively.

61 Patrick Hanan writes of a »rich mixture of geographical, historical and contemporary information«. See *Courtesans and Opium. Romantic Illusions of the Fool of Yangzhou*, tr. by Patrick Hanan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), ix.

62 南門外城腳，草生時，為放馬牧馬之地。古渡橋北路，昔為市河，西岸有影園，今城湖中長

The dynamic sections of the text obviously could guide readers through the town, and appeared in every chapter, but they did not represent the prevailing mode of description. Another type of dynamic account was, by its very nature, the occasional journey in progress that, however, appears quite exceptionally. One is the imperial tour in 1765,⁶³ at the beginning of the three decades during which the book was gradually written. (It is of course conspicuous that the first major account, which opens the book, coincides with the period of writing. However, time as a structural device of writing is not used any more, although within a description of a site, or an account of an event, the chronological order of matters is respected.) Another journey to be signaled as an example of motion is the excursion on Slim West Lake, which local men of letters, including Li Dou, undertook in 1771. The actual sailing is rendered as follows:

Several guests were invited [to enjoy a ride] on the lake. [We took along] a jug of liquor, five pecks of rice, a tripod stove, twenty-six lanterns, a portable chess set, and a flute, all of which were transported by two pole carriers. All in all, including the boat staff and the guests, there were twenty-two people in the boat. While the boat floated on the stream, some of us were seated and leaning against the railing, some bent over it watching the water flow by, some sipped tea, and some played chess while others watched them with interest. One man was painting [a picture] with his fingertips for another, but his technique, regrettably, was lacking. Another one sighed in bewilderment, pulling his beard. One man moaned to another that he had lost [his chess game] due to the advice from onlookers. Therefore, as soon as the game was over, they played another one: the outcome was reversed, so they battled again and again. Still others took their shoes off, some sang, and some composed verses to a set form. One man looked behind pointing out something, while the gaze of one who sat next to him followed. Some were calling out to the other boats, changing seats all across [the boat] before they could warm up. In due course, the boat pulled into Green Willow Bay where it made a stop. We found a picnic site and started preparing the food. When we had finished the meal, the host, distressed by

嶼。東岸由南門大街財神廟巷，為靜慧園大路。出壇巷過美人橋，至南紅橋，接掃垢山大路，至西門大街，凡此皆南湖兩岸也。Li Dou, *Yangzhou huafang lu*, 7 [37].

63 *Ibid.*, 1 [1-3].

the hubbub, forbade any more chess games. We did not sail any further, sat together inside the Gazebo of Implied Emptiness and each of us told a story.⁶⁴

The topographic surveys, nonetheless, were not always built of dynamic elements, and similarly, the thematic accounts of the text were not necessarily static. A wealth of biographic material falls into the static mode, and so does the quoting of verses, composed by local literati. However, anecdotes and tales, set in past, but chiefly from the present time, seem—by the swift manner of discourse—quite dynamic.

Be it either way, the mode of the text switches between motion and rest, and the text becomes rhythmical. It therefore seems that the deliberate alternations of motion and rest are another structural device, which the author knowingly applied.

5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the question raised in the first paragraph may be taken up again: Was there any intention behind the imaginary route, and what was its meaning? As it turns out, on the basis of the above made analysis of the route itinerary, only two chapters out of sixteen are set inside the city proper; the reminder is set outside the city walls, usually ‘wandering’ into the gardens: the prominence of garden topic once again needs to be underlined. This result offers interesting hints as to what the notion of ‘city’ may have meant to the author and, on his behalf, to the social elite at the time. What were the expectations of his contemporaries towards a book devoted to a city? Ruan Yuan, an esteemed member of the scholarly circles who sponsored the first publication of the book, underlined the value of the text from the standpoint of history and historical topography. In his view, a book about a city was primarily supposed to be a historical treatise. Xie Rongsheng 謝溶生 (*jinsbi* 1745), a career official and local gentleman of distinction, shared the general admiration for Yangzhou gardens and was contented with the book just being a beautified record of gardens. The

64 客有邀餘湖上者。酒一甕、米五鬥、鑼三足、燈二十有六、掛棋一局、洞簫一品，篙二手，客與舟子二十有二人，共一舟，放乎中流。有倚檻而坐者，有俯視流水者，有茗戰者，有對弈者，有從旁而諦視者，有憐其技之不工而為之指畫者，有撚須而浩歎者，有訟成敗於局外者，於是一局甫終，一局又起，顛倒得失，轉相戰鬥。有脫足者，有歌者、和者，有顧盼指點者，有隔座目語者，有隔舟相呼應者，縱橫位次，席不暇暖。是時舟入綠楊灣，行且住，舍而具食。食訖，客病其囂，戒弈，亦不遊，共坐涵虛閣各言故事。 *Ibid.*, 12 [11].

unconventional poet Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1798) enjoyed Li Dou's excursions into the informal and less standard areas of contemporary life.⁶⁵ Each of them presented a different standpoint, without expressing any sufficient indication of the perceptions of a city at the time.

The route in *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* quite obviously serves as a means of grading the scenic sites. Chapters 9 and 10, whose dominant topics are the pleasure district, gardens and poetry, are the two longest in the entire book, and they were in accord with the author's personal inclinations. However, the text culminates in the final chapters, set further and further away from the town, giving in gardens and finally natural wilderness. The whole structure is that of a long painted scroll.

Whether telling of the past or the present, Li Dou maintained a prevalently positive attitude, hardly ever mentioning negative events.⁶⁶ A large portion of Li Dou's record deals with entertainment: their various types, popular and elitist, who organized and/or sponsored them, and where—in whose garden—they took place. This, then, is the manner through which the gaudy aspects of Yangzhou urban life were reflected. He enjoyed his journey—he did so because he only selected the 'enjoyable' about it—writing with a zeal and excitement that can be felt throughout the book. In his Preface, the author states:

When I came back and settled down at home, I often sailed on the lake, explored all the buildings and read about their history until I became quite familiar with them. And so, neither the smallest lane nor the least hovel escaped my attention. Whatever I have seen and heard, from the elegant rhymes by scholars and worthies down to the trifling and naughty events, as well as the funny and vulgar talk [of the common folk], everything has been included and recorded during the course of

65 These three literati, and Li Dou, wrote the prefaces to *The Pleasure Boats*; Ruan Yuan also wrote two postscripts (*ba* 跋) for later printings of the book. Their prefaces were followed by a set of complimentary poems (*tici* 題詞) by fifty contemporaries which, however, were omitted in the *Zhonghua shuju* edition.

66 For example, the politically sensitive corruption case of the Yangzhou prefecture examinations in the year 1711, which resulted in several death sentences, is not mentioned. See Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 57. Calamities are also avoided in the text, for example the fire, which erupted in the salt port in 1770 when Li Dou lived in the city, killing some 1,400 people and destroying 130 ships. See Wu Jin 吳晉, *Yangzhou gugang shi* 揚州古港史 [A History of Old Yangzhou Port] (Beijing: Renmin jiaotong chubanshe, 1988), 180.

thirty years, from *jiashen* [1764] to *yimao* [1795]. The multitude has been collected, and woven into a book: places are the warp, people and their stories are the woof.⁶⁷

Li Dou's ambition was to capture Yangzhou in its entirety. This has not been achieved. One cannot possibly expect that a private piece of writing, be it as extensive as *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou*, contain complete information on, and describe 'the least hovel' of that city. When handling a broad topic like the one chosen here, it was not only rational but also effective for the author to select the important, essential, meaningful moments, and arrange them in a certain order, according to his narrative concept, and using certain formal techniques. This, Li Dou has been able to achieve. As the present-day scholar Wang Jun 王軍 has observed, »readers would have taken [the book] just for another record of gardens [*yuānlín shílù* 園林實錄], were it not for the clever and correlated insets of history, culture, anecdotes and folk customs.«⁶⁸ Consequently, the text is not particularly homogenous, a characteristic which explains why it has variously been classified as either a gazetteer, or miscellaneous notes.

However, when comparing 'the warp and the woof' one gets the impression that the author himself stressed the 'events' at the expense of the topography, which rather seem to provide a background. Throughout, there is a visible tendency to present the city through the deeds of people who, in one way or another, contributed to its characteristics and fame. The topographic material is nevertheless a valuable research source thanks to its extreme richness, although its style is contracted when confronted with current demands of complete topographic information.

At the end, what can be made of the fact that text of *The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou* mainly dwells outside the walls, oftentimes at some distance away from them? And if the walls did not indicate the limits of the city, what did? The answer appears to be that Yangzhou city extended as far as its culture reached. The garden on the outskirts had been, and should be, considered as the urban space, since it was there that the city residents met, discussed and rested. Historically, it proves that the city overgrew its walls and that the inhabitants did not feel the necessity of the walls' protection. *The Pleasure Boats of*

67 退而家居，則時泛舟湖上，往來諸工段間，閱曆既熟，於是一小巷一廁居無不詳悉。又嗜以目之所見，耳之所聞，上之賢士大夫流風餘韻，下之瑣細猥褻之事，談諧俚俗之談，皆登而記之。自甲申至於乙卯，凡三十年，所集既多，刪而成帙。以地為經，以人物記事為緯。 Li Dou, *Yangzhou huafang lu*, viii.

68 Li Dou 李斗, *Yangzhou huafang lu* 揚州畫舫錄 [The Pleasure Boats of Yangzhou] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2001), 2 (Editor's Introduction).

Yangzhou was written two centuries ago, and the perception of what ‘city’ means, or how to write an account of it, has changed. One ought to accept the particular composition of the book, as well as the fact that even in such extensive piece of writing, some data were omitted.⁶⁹ In the end, it is always the author who, by his subjective judgment, determines the final shape of a text and creates its character.

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69 Surprisingly, there is no mention of Shi Chengjin 石成金, alias Shi Tianji 石天基 (1660–after 1739), the local author of such collections of edifying stories as Rain-Flower Scent (*Yubua xiang* 雨花香) and Heaven-Reaching Joy (*Tongtian le* 通天樂). See Roland Altenburger, »Early-Qing Yangzhou in Shi Chengjin’s Vernacular Vignettes«, in *Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou*, ed. by Lucie Olivová and Vibeke Børdahl (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), 149–176 *passim*.