

# **The printing industry in China, ca. 1368-1912**

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## **Abstract**

The human desire to produce written texts is something from time immemorial. Many studies into writing and the art of printing have been done in both China and Europe. Yet, very few quantitative information is currently available for China. In this paper we try to give a breakdown of the number of printed books between the Ming and Qing dynasties on a provincial level. We find that differences in the amount of printed book are considerable and persistent over time. Furthermore, adding information on the costs of printing these books and the income from selling them, we are able to obtain the direct contribution of this economic sector to the economic sector to Chinese long-run development.