Library of Congress, since the photographs from the first edition cover all folios that have been found to show deliberate changes from the original text in the 1640 reprint.

A careful comparison of a large number of the folios of this work with the original edition showed that almost all of the so-called revision of 1640 was printed from the blocks of the original edition, and, furthermore, these blocks were in very much the same state when the 1640 reprint was made as when the two known copies of the first edition were struck off. In other words, the blocks were slightly worn but still good enough to print a perfectly legible text. Of course, it is probable that a very few blocks of the first edition were lost during the period from 1590 to 1640, and Mr. M. J. Hagerty thinks he has located at least one and possibly three such blocks recut in inferior style for the 1640 reprint. Perhaps the most significant change of all is found on the first folio of each of the two books of illustrations which accompany this work. The original edition gives a three-column list of compilers of the illustrations—Li Chien-chung, Li Chien-yüan, and Li Shu-tsung, the first two being sons and the last a grandson of the author, Li Shih-chên. In the 1640 edition, although the original block is preserved, these three columns have been cut out completely and a piece of wood inlaid in both the original blocks substituting the names of three other men—Ch'êng Chio-hsiang, Ch'êng Shih-yü, and Sung Tsung-yin—to whom these illustrations are credited.

Since these illustrations are without doubt the original illustrations, printed from the original blocks with very slight changes, due entirely to the slight wearing away of the blocks, this act of Ch'êng Shao-ch'i would appear to justify the use of the ugly word " piracy," and certainly it is not a carefully revised edition as indicated in the preface. It is just possible that very careful comparison will bring to light a few corrections of characters, although those that have been observed so far were made in the original blocks and not by Ch'êng Shao-ch'i.

What probably happened is that the original edition published in 1590 became at once very popular, so much