The "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters) Bibliography in Its Own Context

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On the shortlist of truly indispensable texts within early China studies, a special place is reserved for Ban Gu's 班固 (32–92 CE) "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on Arts and Letters), the oldest extant bibliography in the East Asian tradition, if not the oldest extant and complete bibliography from the ancient world. After outlining the bibliography in the first section, I argue that the "Yiwen zhi" was never meant to serve as a "library catalogue" in the everyday sense of the term. Instead, it was a highly selective and ideological subject bibliography of texts deemed by Han (202 BCE–220 CE) imperial bibliographers as being useful for governance. The second half of the paper counters the tendency to read the "Yiwen zhi" as a stand-alone text or even, in the words of Mark Edward Lewis, as "the final encyclopedic work of the Western Han." Set against the other nine "treatises" (*zhi* 志) of Ban Gu's *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han), the "Yiwen zhi" emerges as one among many products of a centuries-long effort undertaken by numerous parties to "survey" (*lüe* 略) and "synthesize" (*zong* 總) all domains of knowledge of relevance to the imperium, a project modeled on the "Hong fan" 洪範 (Great Plan) chapter of the *Shangshu* 尚書 (Exalted Documents). The rhetoric, organization, and value of the "Yiwen zhi" were all contingent on that larger vision.

What is the "Yiwen zhi"?

The basic facts and history of the "Yiwen zhi" are well established.[1] As recounted in the bibliography's preface and elsewhere in the *Hanshu*, Emperor Cheng 成帝 (r. 33–7 BCE) in the year 26 BCE ordered Imperial Household Grandee (*guanglu dafu* 光祿大夫) Liu Xiang 劉向 (79–8 BCE) to "oversee the collation of the Five Classics and reserve writings within [the imperial archives]" 領校中五經祕書.[2] Liu Xiang's specific remit was the collation of "canons and commentaries, [writings of] the masters, and poetic compositions" 經傳諸子詩賦. Working alongside him were Infantry Colonel (*bubing xiaowei* 步兵校尉) Ren Hong 任宏, Director of Archives (*taishi ling* 太史令) Yin Xian 尹咸, and Attending Physician (*shiyi* 侍醫) Li Zhuguo 李柱國, who oversaw the collation of military writings (*bingshu* 兵書), algorithmic and technical texts (*shushu* 數術), and medical texts (*fangji* 方技), respectively.[3]

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1. For the text of the "Yiwen zhi," see *Hanshu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.1701–84.

2. *Hanshu* 36.1949–50; see also *Hanshu* 10.310. All titles are after Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1980). For additional context regarding the 26 BCE moment, see especially Michael Nylan and Griet Vankeerberghen, eds., *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2015).

3. *Hanshu* 30.1701. On the rendering of *taishi ling*, see the introduction to Stephen Durrant, Wai-yee Li, Michael Nylan, and Hans van Ess, *The Letter to Ren An and Sima Qian's Legacy* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2016), 18–21.

One product of their efforts was a reference work entitled the *Bielu* 別錄 (Separate Listings), which described each work's collation and summarized its content. The *Hanshu* records that Liu Xiang was further assisted by Ban Gu's great-uncle, Ban You 班斿.[4] A few years after Liu Xiang's death in 7 BCE, his son and Palace Attendant and Chief Commandant of Imperial Equipages (*shizhong fengche duwei* 侍中奉車都尉) Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 BCE–23 CE) at the behest of Emperor Ai 哀帝 (r. 7–1 BCE) continued his father's work by "collecting the texts of the Six Arts and various other works and classifying them as the *Seven Surveys*" 集六藝群書，種別為七略.[5] Like the *Bielu*, the *Qilüe* was presented to the throne upon its completion. Where the *Bielu* seems to have been a compilation of discrete bibliographical records, the *Qilüe* was probably the earliest effort to "categorize" (*zhongbie* 種別) and "synthesize" (*zong* 總) the collection as a whole.[6]

Today, the *Bielu* and *Qilüe* exist only in fragments, including a handful of Liu Xiang's "listings" (*lu* 錄) preserved as prefaces to other works.[7] Consequently, the bulk of our knowledge of the activities of the late Western Han bibliographers is derived from Ban Gu's later version of Liu Xin's *Qilüe*—the "Yiwen zhi." The question of the relationship between the "Yiwen zhi" and the *Bielu* and *Qilüe* is a difficult one. In his commentary to the "Yiwen zhi," Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645) supplemented the text with more than twenty quotations from the *Bielu* and *Qilüe*, thus revealing the "Yiwen zhi" as a significantly abbreviated version of its predecessors.[8] Since the earlier works' disappearance towards the end of the Tang period (618–907), various scholars have compiled more extensive collections of fragments.[9] Another difference has to do with textual loss. In its entry for a *Shi Zhou* 史籀 (Scribe Zhou) text in fifteen fascicles, the "Yiwen zhi" notes that "six fascicles were lost during the Jianwu reign period [25–56 CE]" 建武時亡六篇矣, presumably due to the sacking of Chang'an 長安 and the transfer to the Eastern Han capital at Luoyang 洛陽.[10] In two other instances, Ban Gu noted that he "had [Liu Xiang's] listing but not the text [itself]" 有錄無書.[11] Ban

4. *Hanshu* 100a.4203. See also Anthony E. Clark, *Ban Gu's History of Early China* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2008), 78.

5. *Hanshu* 36.1967. The "Yiwen zhi" introduction simply states that Liu Xin "synthesized the various writings and presented them as the *Seven Surveys*" 總群書而奏其七略. For an introduction to the accomplishments of Liu Xin and his father, see Michael Loewe, "Liu Xiang and Liu Xin," in Nylan and Vankeerberghen, *Chang'an 26 BCE*, 369–89.

6. See Yao Mingda 姚名達, *Zhongguo muluxue shi* 中國目錄學史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2002), 37–41.

7. For the most up-to-date collection of these fragments, see Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 (supplemented by Deng Junjie 鄧駿捷), *Qilüe Bielu yiwen, Qilüe yiwen* 七略別錄佚文，七略佚文 (Macau: Universidade de Macau, 2007). For the argument that these works were lost towards the end of the Tang, see p. 4. Texts for which Liu Xiang's listings have been preserved include the *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (pp. 34–35), *Xunzi* 荀子 (pp. 37–38), and *Guanzi* 管子 (pp. 43–45).

8. For instance, where the "Yiwen zhi" simply lists a "Fu shi er pian" 服氏二篇 (Mr. Fu's [version of the *Changes*] in two fascicles) within the *Yi* 易 (Changes) subdivision, Yan Shigu quotes the *Bielu* to add that "Mr. Fu was a man of Qi whose name was Fu Guang" 服氏，齊人，號服光. See *Hanshu* 30.1703–4.

9. For a summary of these efforts, see Yao Zhenzong, *Qilüe Bielu yiwen*, 4.

10. *Hanshu* 30.1719.

11. *Hanshu* 30.1713–14. The first is an entry for a "Jia shi zhuan" 夾氏傳 (Mr. Jia's Commentary [to the *Annals*]) text in eleven *juan*, the second is the *Taishigong shu* 太史公書 (Writings of the Grand Scribe, i.e., the *Shiji* 史記 [Scribal Records]), ten chapters of which were lost by Ban Gu's time. With regards to the former, the *Suishu* 隨書 (History of the Sui) bibliography, the "Jingji zhi" 經籍志 (Treatise on the Classics and Other Writings), explains that Mr. Jia's commentary was lost "during the chaos of Wang Mang's [reign]" 王莽之亂. See Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643), *Suishu* 隨書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 932. In a rare acknowledgement of the existence of other *Hanshu* treatises, Wang Zhongmin 王重民 asked why Ban Gu did not update the "Yiwen zhi" just as he updated other treatises to reflect Eastern Han realities. His suggestion was that Ban Gu sought to represent the imperial archives at

Gu also supplemented Liu Xin's catalogue with new texts by Yang Xiong 楊雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) and a handful of others.[12]

Figure 1 presents the entirety of the "Yiwen zhi" reduced to two-point font. As seen there and in the table below, the bibliography consists of six major divisions: the "Six Arts" (*liu yi* 六藝),[13] "Masters" (*zhuzi* 諸子), "Poetic Compositions" (*shifu* 詩賦), "Military Writings" (*bingshu* 兵書), "Algorithmic and Technical Texts" (*shushu* 數術), and "[Medical] Recipes and Techniques" (*fangji* 方技). Together with a "general survey" (*ji lüe* 輯略) that doubles as an introduction, these categories comprise the seven "surveys" (*lüe* 略) of Liu Xin's *Qilüe*. Each major division is split into further subdivisions or "categories" (*zhong* 種):

1 六藝	1—*Yi* 易 (Changes), 2—*Shu* 書 (Documents), 3—*Shi* 詩 (Odes), 4—*Li* 禮 (Rituals), 5—*Yue* 樂 (Music), 6—*Chunqiu* 春秋 (Annals), 7—*Lunyu* 論語 (Analects), 8—*Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety), 9—*xiaoxue* 小學 (elementary learning)
2 諸子	1—*rujia* 儒家 (Ru), 2—*daojia* 道家 (Daoists), 3—*yinyangjia* 陰陽家 (yin-yang experts), 4—*fajia* 法家 (legalists), 5—*mingjia* 名家 (terminologists), 6—*Mojia* 墨家 (Mohists), 7—*zonghengjia* 從橫家 (strategists), 8—*zajia* 雜家 (syncretists), 9—*nongjia* 農家 (agriculturalists), 10—*xiaoshuo* 小說 (folklorists)
3 詩賦	1—*fu* 賦 (rhapsodies [after Qu Yuan 屈原]), 2—*fu* 賦 (rhapsodies [after Lu Jia 陸賈]), 3—*fu* 賦 (rhapsodies [after Sun Qing 孫卿 or Xunzi 荀子]), 4—*zafu* 雜賦 (miscellaneous *fu*), 5—*geshi* 歌詩 (lyrics)
4 兵書	1—*quanmou* 權謀 (tactics and strategems), 2—*xingshi* 形勢 (exigencies and circumstances), 3—*yinyang* 陰陽 (yin and yang), 4— *jiqiao* 技巧 (techniques and technology)
5 數術	1—*tianwen* 天文 (heavenly patterns), 2—*lipu* 曆譜 (calendars and tables), 3—*wuxing* 五行 (five phases), 4—*shigui* 蓍龜 (milfoil and plastron divination), 5—*zazhan* 雜占 (miscellaneous prognostications), 6—*xingfa* 形法 (morphoscopy)
6 方技	1—*yijing* 醫經 (medical classics), 2—*jingfa* 經方 (pharmacology), 3—*fangzhong* 房中 (in the bedroom), 4—*shenxian* 神僊 (spirit transcendence)

In the remainder of the paper, I shall use this numbering scheme to reference particular sections, e.g., 5/1 for "heavenly patterns."

Entries within each subdivision (indicated by ○ in Figure 1, with entries listed in clockwise order from the top edge of each subdivision) are arranged in a hybrid chronological/subject/genre order.[14] Where possible, the bibliographer listed earlier works first and like works together, e.g., placing the earlier *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo Traditions) ahead of the *Gongyang* 公羊 and *Guliang* 穀梁 commentaries to the *Chunqiu* or splitting the *shigui* 蓍龜 subdivision into two halves, the first on plastron divination and the second on milfoil divination.[15] Within the "Six Arts" division, he also ordered texts according to their genre and status,

their fullest and most glorious. See *Zhongguo muluxue shi luncong* 中國目錄學史論叢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 44.

12. See, e.g., the "addition" (*ru* 入) of a paleographical work by Yang Xiong at *Hanshu* 30.1720.

13. Yan Shigu (*Hanshu* 30.1702) glosses *liu yi* as *liu jing* 六經 (Six Classics). Although the yi of "Yiwen zhi" certainly refers to the classics as opposed to the six arts of antiquity (ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics), I have used the translation "Treatise on Arts and Letters" to reflect the reorientation of elite pursuits around textual learning, and to distinguish it from the later "Jingji zhi" bibliography within the *Suishu*.

14. The vast majority of entries only list a single text, but there are exceptions, as when the first entry of the *Yi* subdivision (1/1) lists three different versions of the classic in twelve fascicles (the Shi 施, Meng 孟, and Liangqiu 梁丘).

15. *Hanshu* 30.1712–13, 1770.

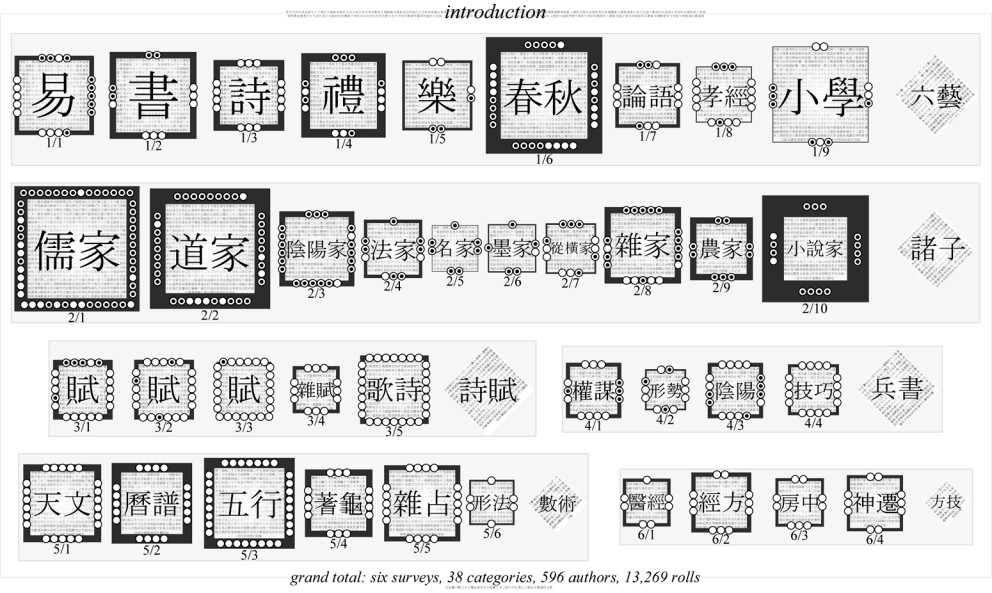

Fig. 1. A map of the "Yiwen zhi."

listing the "classics" (*jing* 經) first, followed by their commentarial "traditions" (*zhuan* 傳), "chapter-and-verse" commentaries (*zhangju* 章句), and various other exegetical formats.

The amount of information included within individual entries varies. All entries include at least a title and a *juan* 卷 (roll) or *pian* 篇 (fascicle).[16] (In Figure 1, the thickness of each subdivision border is relative to the total number of fascicles or rolls listed for that subdivision.) A number of entries (indicated by ⦿ in Figure 1) include additional information about a work's author, chronology, and/or content. In a few instances, the bibliographer also noted when such information was "unknown" (*bu zhi* 不知) or when a work was "lost" or "missing" (*wang* 亡, *wu* 無).[17] Lines tabulating the total number of *juan*, *pian*, and *jia* 家 ("individuals" or "textual lineages") are included for all subdivisions and major divisions as well as for the "Yiwen zhi" as a whole.[18] The final count includes "6 major divisions, 38

16. For the suggestion that *juan* texts were written on silk and *pian* texts on bamboo, see Li Ling 李零, *Lantai wanjuan: Du Hanshu Yiwenzhi* 蘭台萬卷：讀《漢書•藝文志》(Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2011), 9–10.

17. For partially or wholly "lost" or "missing" texts, see n. 11 above. For texts whose authors or chronology were "unknown," see the entries for the *Nei ye* 內業, *Lan yan* 讕言, *Gongyi* 功議, and *Rujia yan* 儒家言 in 2/1, *Daojia yan* 道家言 in 2/2, *Weihou guan* 衛侯官 and *Za yinyang* 雜陰陽 in 2/3, *Yan shishi* 燕十事 and *Fajia yan* 法家言 in 2/4, and *Zajia yan* 雜家言 in 2/7.

18. Translating *jia* 家 as "individual" is misleading in many instances because not all texts in the "Yiwen zhi" were authored in the same way. For example, the *Lunyu* subdivision lists an *Yi zou* 議奏 (Debates and Memorials) text in eighteen fascicles identified as a record of the imperially sponsored Shiqu ge 石渠閣 (Stone Canal Pavilion) discussions of 51 BCE. Even though it does not identify the work's author, the "Yiwen zhi" still counts it among the twelve *jia* of the *Lunyu* subdivision. In such instances, *jia* is better understood as a distinct "textual lineage" or "area of expertise." On this point, see Li Ling, *Santai wanjuan*, 10–11. On the complex history of the term *jia* in the period, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, "Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions through Exemplary Figures in Early China," *T'oung Pao* 89 (2003): 59–99, and Jens Østergård Petersen, "Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn? On the Meaning of *Pai Chia* in Early Chinese Sources," *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995): 1–52.

subdivisions, 596 *jia*, and 13,269 *juan*" 六略三十八種，五百九十六家，萬三千二百六十九卷. However, owing to the addition and subtraction of certain texts by Ban Gu, the actual numbers are slightly different.[19] It has been estimated that more than three-quarters of the works listed in the bibliography are no longer extant.[20]

All major divisions and subdivisions (the poetic subdivisions excepted) are capped with prose summaries ranging from twenty characters to over five hundred characters in length. (In Figure 1, these are the diamond-shaped boxes at the end of each division.) Many of these summaries open with a canonical quotation, most often from the *Classic of Changes* or *Analects*. Within the "Masters" division, the summaries trace the origin of each school to a particular office within the idealized bureaucracy of the Zhou 周 dynasty (e.g., the Daoists to "scribal offices" [*shiguan* 史官]). Many relate a genre's history from the time of the ancient sage kings through the "decline of the Zhou" 周之衰, the "Qin burning of the books" 秦燔書, and the "rise of the Han" 漢興, in addition to listing the most important moments and figures in its Han reception.

BUT WHAT IS THE "YIWEN ZHI" REALLY?

The more difficult questions concern the nature of the "Yiwen zhi," its ideological agenda, and its historical value.

The limitation of the "Yiwen zhi" as a source is a common theme within the Chinese scholarly tradition. Implicit in Yan Shigu's effort to supplement the text with quotations from the *Qilüe* and *Bielu* was the recognition that the "Yiwen zhi" did not include as much information as it could (or should) have. Following Yan Shigu's lead, some scholars have used the received text as scaffolding for an even more comprehensive picture of the early textual heritage.[21] Still others have been more pointed with their criticisms. After praising Ren Hong, Yin Xian, and Li Zhuguo for their work on the final three divisions of the bibliography, Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162) criticized Liu Xiang and Liu Xin for (among other things) "being too trivial, jumbled, and unclear" 冗雜不明 and "lacking any sense of order or [proper] categories" 無倫類. As for Ban Gu, "he did not realize [the Lius'] mistakes, thus later generations have lost many writings and scholars have not understood their original divisions" 不知其失，是故後世亡書多，而學者不知源別.[22] For Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), Ban Gu's reliance on the duplicitous forger Liu Xin doomed the "Yiwen zhi" from the get-go.[23] Particular aspects and details of the "Yiwen zhi" have also prompted criticism, as when Zhang Xuecheng 章學誠 (1738–1801) criticized the inclusion of the *Erya*

19. For a breakdown of these numbers, see Li Ling, *Lantai wanjuan*, 221–22. Owing to various additions and subtractions by Ban Gu to the *Qilüe*, the actual count differs slightly from the listed numbers: 592 *jia* and 13,219 *juan* and *pian*.

20. Derk Bodde, "The State and Empire of Qin," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 1: *The Ch'in and Han Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), 71.

21. See, e.g., Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296), *Hanshu Yiwenzhi kaozheng* 漢書藝文志考證, and Yao Zhenzong 姚振宗 (1842–1906), *Hanshu yiwenzhi shibu* 漢書藝文志拾補.

22. *Tong zhi* 通志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 1821–22. In the same passage, Zheng Qiao also criticized the derivative nature of the *Hanshu* treatises in general, which copied Sima Qian 司馬遷 (d. 86 BCE?) as well as the Lius. As discussed by Wang Zhongmin (*Zhongguo muluxue shi conglun*, 46), Zhang Xuecheng echoed some of Zheng Qiao's criticisms, particularly with respect to Ban Gu's poor understanding of the methods of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin.

23. Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao* 新學偽經考, as cited in Chen Sanyuan 諶三元, "Lidai *Hanshu* 'Yiwen zhi' yanjiu zongshu" 歷代《漢書•藝文志》研究綜述, *Tushuguan* 2000.2: 38–41.

爾雅 (Approaching Elegance) lexicography and *Gujin zi* 古今字 (Characters Old and New) paleography within the *Classic of Filial Piety* subdivision.[24]

Those who would use the "Yiwen zhi" as a more-or-less transparent source of the early textual heritage must first contend with its ideological agenda. The noted bibliographer and Shakespeare scholar Sir Walter Greg defined the work of the bibliographer (not uncontroversially) as follows: "what the bibliographer is concerned with is pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain written or printed signs. With these signs he is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his."[25] Even a cursory reading of the "Yiwen zhi" is enough to dispel the notion that its author(s) approached their material with even a semblance of impartiality. To the contrary, the text goes out of its way to establish the canonical traditions of the *Changes*, *Documents*, *Odes*, *Rituals*, *Music*, and *Annals* as the collective wellspring of all textual knowledge worth knowing, a bias evident from the opening lines:

> Formerly when Zhongni [i.e., Kongzi] passed away his subtle words were cut off, and when the seventy students died his great principles were split. Thus the *Annals* was divided into five traditions, the *Odes* into four, and the *Changes* into several textual lineages. Amid the strategic scheming of the Warring States and the struggle between the true and the false, the words of the masters were chaotic and confused. With the scourge of the Qin, literary writings were burned and destroyed in order to keep the populace simpleminded. At the rise of the Han, the failures of the Qin were reformed, writings were collected on a grand scale, and the paths for presenting books [to the imperium] were opened up. During the time of Filial Emperor Wu, the sagely one above sighed at the lost books and missing bamboo slips, and at the decline of ritual and collapse of music, and said, "How extreme is Our grief!" Thereupon he established a policy of archiving writings and instituted offices for copying texts. All [writings down to] the traditions and explanations of the masters filled up the reserve archives. During the reign of Emperor Cheng, due to the loss of a sizable number of writings, he dispatched the Internuncio Chen Nong to seek out lost writings from throughout the realm.
> 昔仲尼沒而微言絶，七十子喪而大義乖。故春秋分為五，詩分為四，易有數家之傳。戰國從衡，真偽分爭，諸子之言紛然殽亂。至秦患之，乃燔滅文章，以愚黔首。漢興，改秦之敗，大收篇籍，廣開獻書之路。迄孝武世，書缺簡脫，禮壞樂崩，聖上喟然而稱曰：「朕甚閔焉！」於是建藏書之策，置寫書之官，下及諸子傳說，皆充祕府。至成帝時，以書頗散亡，使謁者陳農求遺書於天下。[26]

Not only does the bibliography go on to assign each canonical tradition its own section within the "Six Arts," a privilege it denies to other works, it repeatedly subordinates other genres to the classics. The writings of the masters are the "branches and currents of the Six Classics" 六經之支與流裔, all later poetic compositions have their source in the *Odes*, and military writings are legitimated with reference to the "Hong fan" 洪範 (Great Plan) chapter of the *Shangshu*.[27] In so doing, as Mark Edward Lewis has argued, the "Yiwen zhi" presents

24. Cited in Zhang Shunhui 張舜徽 (1911–1992), *Hanshu yiwenzhi tongshi* 漢書藝文志通釋 (Wuchang: Huazhong shifan daxue, 2003), 244. See also Wang Zhongmin, *Zhongguo muluxue shi luncong* 28–33, for a discussion of the influence of the "Yiwen zhi" on the later tradition.

25. "Bibliography: An Apologia," in *Collected Papers*, ed. J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 246; published originally in *The Library*, 4th series, 13 (1932): 113–43; quoted in D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 9. As noted by McKenzie, who takes issue with Gregg's position, this view has formed "the basis of any claim that the procedures of bibliography are scientific."

26. *Hanshu* 30.1701. The language of the opening lines echoes a letter composed by Liu Xin during Emperor Ai's 哀帝 reign (7–1 BCE) in which he argued that official *boshi* 博士 (erudite) positions should be established for certain *guwen* 古文 (ancient script) texts, including the *Zuozhuan*. See the biography of Liu Xin at *Hanshu* 36.1968; for a full translation, see Loewe, "Liu Xiang and Liu Xin," 380–84.

27. *Hanshu* 30.1746, 1755–56, and 1762.

"all forms of writing . . . within an intellectual universe established by the state canon that was understood as the textual form of the Han empire."[28] This agenda explains the text's tendency to treat "multiplicity of versions and texts as a problem to be corrected," the effort to equate "generic categories with political offices," and "the superiority of general, encompassing skills to limited, technical ones."[29]

Other manifestations of the same biases are more subtle. If Kongzi was the great authenticator and validator of the canon, as presented in Sima Qian's biography,[30] then his invocation primarily within the "Six Arts" and "Masters" divisions signals that other genres did not warrant authentication, at least not to the same extent.[31] As noted above, a number of entries mention whether a work was lost, or whether its author or chronology was unknown. Such annotations only appear within the first two divisions, yet another indication that other genres did not require the same level of scrutiny. As illustrated in Figure 1, the "Masters" and the "Six Arts" also include significantly more information (as seen in the ratio of entries with annotations ⦿ to those without ○), greater numbers of texts, and higher *pian*/*juan* counts than other divisions. Strikingly, no author, date, or content annotations are included for any work within the fifth and sixth divisions.

Recent manuscript finds have provided additional reasons to question the completeness and accuracy of Ban Gu's survey. These include the gulf between the tidy categorizations of the "Yiwen zhi" and the miscellaneousness of numerous manuscript finds, which tend to mix and match texts and ideas traditionally associated with particular schools of thought; the preponderance of technical, administrative, mantic, and occult writings in the manuscripts, genres which are both underrepresented and de-emphasized within the "Yiwen zhi";[32] and the sheer numbers of excavated manuscripts not listed in the bibliography. In his review of these points, Martin Kern concluded that "the imperial catalogue was not a disinterested collection and description of all available materials, but rather reflects a selective and prescriptive vision of the textual heritage superimposed on a far more eclectic, less neatly divided universe of Warring States writing."[33]

28. Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 226.

29. Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1999), 326–32. See also Li Ling's nine-point analysis of the text's ideology in *Lantai wanzhang*, 2–5.

30. *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 47.1935–38.

31. See 1/1–9, 2/1, 2/4–6, 2/8–9, as well as the summaries of the first four divisions. A final mention in 6/4, the subdivision on *shenxian*, only quotes an otherwise unknown Kongzi saying in order to disparage "the search for the hidden and the pursuit of the strange" 索隱行怪.

32. This is precisely the opposite of what we find in the royal library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, which consists overwhelmingly of "the professional literature of experts in Mesopotamian scientific and religious lore," including mantic, omenological, and medical texts. See Simo Parpola, "Assyrian Library Records," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 42 (1983): 6. For a summary of the bibliography's treatment of technical writings, see especially Donald Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 821–24, which includes the observation that only two of the 278 technical works listed in the "Yiwen zhi" survived in the received literature, the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 and the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經.

33. Kern, "Early Chinese Literature, Beginnings through Western Han," 61, in *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, vol. 1: *To 1375*, ed. Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010). See also pp. 62–63: "Liu Xiang's editorial choices were meaningful and appropriate to the imperial environment of official learning but not necessarily the best reconstructions of ancient texts that originally functioned in a very different cultural context." Thus, it is impossible to imagine the Han bibliographers including, for instance, a section on cookbooks or cake recipes, as Kallimachos (d. 240 BCE) did in his (now lost) catalogue of the library at Alexandria, the *Pinakes* (Lists). On extant *Pinakes* fragments, see Rudolph Blum (tr. Hans H. Wellisch), *Kallimachos: The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 152–53.

We can be even more precise about what the "Yiwen zhi" is, and what it isn't. The "Yiwen zhi" is often referred to as a "catalogue" of the imperial "libraries" at Chang'an.[34] At the risk of pedantry, one might question the appropriateness of that label, if by "library catalogue" one imagines a resource that describes the physical contents of a particular archive or collection with the goal of facilitating access. There is no doubt some connection between the "Yiwen zhi" and the actual holdings of the Han imperial archives, if only because most of the works listed in the bibliography were to be found in the archives themselves. The effort to distinguish the materiality of listed texts—bamboo *pian* versus silk *juan*—also reveals a certain sensitivity to their actual physical characteristics.

In many other respects, however, what the "Yiwen zhi" describes is not an archive but (following Kern) an ideal selection of texts deemed worthy of presentation (*xian* 獻) to the imperium; as such, it is more aptly described as a subject bibliography than a library catalogue.[35] The "Yiwen zhi" includes no information whatsoever about the number of copies of each listed work, how it was acquired (as seen in, e.g., the fragmentary records of the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh),[36] or its location or disposition within the archives.[37] Consequently, there is no indication that its divisions and subdivisions were anything other than a theoretical mapping of works prepared by Liu Xiang et al. in the course of their collation project.[38] Another way of putting the point: if we were to travel back in time to the imperial archives at Chang'an armed only with a copy of the "Yiwen zhi," we might find it a frustrating guide to the archives themselves.[39]

This is not to suggest that Han imperial archivists did not maintain fuller records, or that they did not have other means of generating, maintaining, and transmitting practical archival know-how. The few extant fragments of Liu Xiang's *Bielu* offer a tantalizing glimpse into the textual disarray that confronted Liu Xiang at the beginning of his project. According to his "listing" (*lu* 錄) for the *Xunzi*, for example, "the amount of Sun Qing's writings collated [by Liu Xiang] numbered 322 fascicles; after critically comparing them, [he] excluded 290 fascicles of duplicate material and composed a definitive version in 32 fascicles" 所校讎

34. See, e.g., Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 222; Bodde, "The State and Empire of Qin," 70–71; Kern, "Early Chinese Literature," 22.

35. More precisely, the "Yiwen zhi" is best described as an "enumerative" or "systematic" subject bibliography because "it attempts to record and list rather than to describe minutely" in the manner of an "analytical" biography. For these definitions, see Jean Peters, ed., *Book Collecting: A Modern Guide* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1977), 97–101; excerpted on the Bibliographical Society of America website at http://bibsocamer.org/publications/bibliography-defined/.

36. Parpola, "Assyrian Library Records," 8–10.

37. According to the "Jingji zhi" preface (*Suishu* 32.905), Liu Xin oversaw the transfer of texts from the Wenshi dian 溫室殿 to the Tianlu ge 天祿閣. Yao Mingda's interpretation of this event (*Zhongguo muluxue shi*, 39) is that texts were collated in the former but ultimately stored in the latter.

38. However, see also Loewe's suggestion ("Liu Xiang and Liu Xin," 377) that the transfer of texts from the Wenshi dian to the Tianlu ge indicates that "the *Seven Summaries* was intended for practical purposes, rather than exclusively as an exercise in creating genres of literature."

39. Michael Nylan has written that "the transition from archives to libraries, a major conceptual turn by which the once disparate items in palace archives came to be seen as part of integrated library collections," was a crucial component of the "*haogu* 好古 classicizing movement," which was "preceded by a series of changes in the social practices and attitudes associated with book learning in mid to late Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE). See Nylan, *Yang Xiong and the Pleasures of Reading and Classical Learning in China* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2011), 40–47. Even if the organization of the "Yiwen zhi" did not reflect the organization of any archive or library at the Han capital, its synoptic view of the tradition nevertheless laid the conceptual groundwork for future libraries, and for situating particular works within a larger universe of writing.

中孫卿書凡三百二十二篇，以相校，除復重二百九十篇，定著三十二篇.[40] According to one extant fragment, the *Qilüe* at least listed the various book repositories at the capital: "outside [the palace] there are the archives of the Grand Master of Ceremonies, the Grand Astrologer, and the Erudites; within there are the repositories of the Pavilion of Everlasting [Life], the Expansive Inner [Palace], and the reserve room" 外則有太常、太史、博士之藏，內則有延閣、廣內、祕室之府.[41] For the "Yiwen zhi," however, the miscellaneousness of the imperial archives, descriptions of Liu Xiang's collation work, and even the names of archives were irrelevant.

Given that Ban Gu prepared his text at a time when the *Bielu* and *Qilüe* were still available, the more relevant question is not why Ban Gu excluded so much information from the "Yiwen zhi," but what, if anything, was its distinctive contribution to the presentation of bibliographic knowledge in the early Eastern Han period.

THE "YIWEN ZHI" IN CONTEXT

Studies of the "Yiwen zhi," particularly those within the field of bibliography or *muluxue* 目錄學, tend not to consider the larger context within which the text has come down to us—as the tenth and final *zhi* 志 (record, treatise) of the *Hanshu*.[42] Consequently, many have overlooked the concrete connections between the "Yiwen zhi" and *Hanshu* chapters 21–29, which likewise offer systematic overviews of important topics: "pitch standards and calendrics" (*lü li* 律曆) in chapter 21, "ritual and music" (*li yue* 禮樂) in chapter 22, "[military] punishment and [civil] laws" (*xing fa* 刑法) in chapter 23, "food and currency" (*shi huo* 食貨) in chapter 24, "suburban [and other state] sacrifices" (*jiaosi* 郊祀) in chapter 25, "heavenly patterns" (*tianwen* 天文) in chapter 26, "five phases" (*wuxing* 五行) omenology in chapter 27,[43] "geography" (*dili* 地理) in chapter 28, and "waterways" (*gouxu* 溝洫) in chapter 29. Not only is the "Yiwen zhi" the last and, presumably, least important of these domains (just as technical and medical writings are the least important genres within the "Yiwen zhi" itself), its parallel format and rhetoric indicate that the bibliographic treatise was far from sui generis.

Liu Xiang, Liu Xin, and Other Knowledge Systematizers

The ten treatises portray Liu Xiang and Liu Xin as two of the chief knowledge systematizers of the Han period. Chapter 21 records that Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9–23) in ca. 3 CE summoned "more than a hundred experts in pitch standards from around the realm" 天下通知鐘律者百餘人 and ordered Liu Xin to oversee the presentation of their collected expertise to the throne.[44] In the same chapter, Liu Xiang is said to have "synthesized the six

40. For a summary of similar passages from other prefaces attributed to Liu Xiang, see Yao Mingda, *Zhongguo muluxue shi*, 29–30. Whether those extraneous fascicles were discarded or preserved in the archives is unclear.

41. See the comment credited to Ru Chun 如淳 (third century CE) at *Hanshu* 30.1702 and also preserved (without attribution) at *Suishu* 32.905.

42. My suspicion is that this lacuna has something to do with the technical nature of the treatises, and also with how early China scholars define their specializations. Experts in bibliography read the "Yiwen zhi," experts in geography read the "Dili zhi" 地理志 (Treatise on Geography), experts in astronomy read the "Tianwen zhi" 天文志 (Treatise on Heavenly Patterns), and so on. Within Chinese scholarship, this oversight is exacerbated by the habit of abbreviating the "Yiwen zhi" as the "Han zhi" 漢志 (Han[shu] treatise), as if it was the only such treatise in the *Hanshu*.

43. For the argument that *wuxing* 五行 here refers to the "five resources" of the "Hong fan" 洪範 chapter of the *Shangshu* and not the "five phases [of *qi*]," see Loewe, "Liu Xiang and Liu Xin," 385 n. 17.

44. *Hanshu* 21a.955.

calendars, arrayed what was right and wrong, and composed *On the Five Ways of Measuring Time*" 總六曆，列是非，作五紀論. The chapter goes on to note Liu Xin's elaboration of the *santong li* 三統曆 (calendar of the triple concordance) that revised the "grand inception system" (*taichu li* 太初曆) instituted during Emperor Wu's reign.[45] In chapter 27, Liu Xiang is also said to have "mastered the *Guliang* version of the *Annals*, enumerated its auspicious and inauspicious [signs], and commented on it with reference to the 'Great Plan' [chapter of the *Shangshu*]" 治穀梁春秋，數其禍福，傳以洪範.[46] In chapter 27, the omenological analyses of Liu Xiang and Liu Xin are quoted 156 and 86 times, respectively. According to chapter 28, Liu Xiang also "provided an overview of the [realm's] geographical divisions" 略言其地分 during the reign of Emperor Cheng, the same emperor who ordered the collation of the imperial archives.[47] Crucially, the treatises offer no indication that the Lius' bibliographical pursuits were more consequential than their calendrical, omenological, or geographical activities.[48]

As important as Liu Xiang and Liu Xin obviously were, they were by no means unique. The treatises list a number of other Han-era figures who facilitated the gathering of domain-specific information and its curation as imperially sanctioned knowledge. According to chapter 22, during Emperor Wu's reign Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 and dozens of others were ordered to "survey and discuss pitch standards in order to unite the tones of the eight timbres [of musical instruments] and compose nineteen songs [for the suburban sacrifices]" 造為詩賦，略論律呂，以合八音之調，作十九章之歌.[49] Chapter 25 records Emperor Ai's order to "completely revive the regularly used and active spirit offices of previous eras" 盡復前世所常興諸神祠官, resulting in the imperial sponsorship of over 700 sites and 37,000 sacrifices per year.[50] In relation to Liu Xiang's geographical survey of the empire, chapter 28 notes that Emperor Cheng also ordered Zhu Gong 朱贛 to survey local customs across the empire, the results of which were incorporated by Ban Gu within the treatise.[51] Chapter 29 records Wang Mang's summons of a hundred experts to a conference on flood management whose proceedings were recorded by Huan Tan 桓譚 (43 BCE–28 CE).[52] The "Yiwen zhi" also makes reference to earlier bibliographical projects, one of which was an effort by Zhang Liang 張良 and Han Xin 韓信 in the early Western Han to "organize and arrange [writings on] military methods" 序次兵法, resulting in the collection of 182 distinct textual lineages.[53] The "elementary learning" (*xiaoxue*) subdivision likewise references Emperor Ai's summons in ca. 1 CE of hundreds of experts from around the empire who "recorded characters within the palace" 記字於庭中, resulting in Yang Xiong's compilation of a *Xunzuan pian* 訓纂篇

45. *Hanshu* 21a.979. On the *santong li*, see Christopher Cullen, *Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China: The* Zhou bi suan jing (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 28–33. *Hanshu* 22 also notes that Liu Xiang urged Emperor Cheng to recreate the Zhou structure of the "circular moat" (*biyong* 辟雍), a potent cosmological symbol.

46. *Hanshu* 27a.1317.

47. *Hanshu* 28b.1640.

48. In his concluding evaluation of the Lius at *Hanshu* 36.1972–73, Ban Gu lists their textual activities after their omenological activities but before their calendrical activities.

49. *Hanshu* 22.1045.

50. *Hanshu* 25b.1264.

51. *Hanshu* 28b.1640.

52. *Hanshu* 29.1696–97.

53. *Hanshu* 30.1962–63. For a survey of pre-"Yiwen zhi" bibliographic activities, see Yao Mingda, *Zhongguo muluxue shi*, 17–28.

(Compiled Glosses) text together with a revised edition of the *Cang Jie* 蒼頡 in eighty-nine sections.[54]

The ten treatises do not tell the whole story of the Han imperium's participation in "the encyclopedic epoch" (to quote Lewis).[55] But they at least discourage us from viewing the systematization of book knowledge in a vacuum. As works of historiography, the ten treatises weave together a grand narrative in which Han emperors sanctioned experts in various fields to convene imperial conferences or conduct "surveys" (*lüe*) whose results were then relayed back to the imperium. In treatise after treatise, these activities are contextualized as attempts to reconstitute the wisdom of the sages prior to the Zhou dynasty's "decline" (*shuai* 衰; seventeen instances in seven chapters), the chaos of the Warring States period, and the upheavals of the Qin, including the Qin bibliocaust. In the "Yiwen zhi" as in nearly every other treatise, the "rise of the Han" (漢興; forty-nine instances across nine chapters) marked a renewed commitment to recovering classical models, if not a wholesale return to sagely governance.

Canonical Quotations

All ten treatises draw from a relatively narrow set of canonical sources, chiefly the *Lunyu* (x48), *Shangshu* (x46), *Shijing* (x42), *Zhouyi* (x48), and *Zuozhuan* (x47). Given the prominence of these texts within the *Hanshu* and elsewhere, that observation by itself is not surprising. However, the treatises in numerous instances also quote the exact same lines from the same sets of sources (plus the *Xiaojing*), as illustrated in Figure 2. Moreover, the treatise whose canonical quotations overlap most often with the others' is the "Yiwen zhi," with at least nine such instances.[56]

More compelling are the seven treatises (21, 23–27, 30) that quote the "Hong fan" chapter of the *Shangshu* in eighteen instances (including four times in the "Yiwen zhi" alone) and mention it more than a dozen times. The fourth chapter of the "Zhou Shu" 周書 (Zhou Documents) division of the received *Shangshu*, the "Hong fan," purports to record a conversation between the Viscount of Ji 箕 and Zhou King Wu 周武王 in which the former elucidates the "constant principles" 彝倫 of Heaven, lessons originally communicated by the high god Di 帝 to the sage-king Yu 禹.[57] The Viscount of Ji's instruction is a systematic enumeration and explanation of the "nine domains" (*jiu chou* 九疇) of royal knowledge, all nine of which—from the "five resources" (*wu xing* 五行) through the "five kinds of good fortune" (*wu fu* 五福)—are mentioned at least once across the ten *Hanshu* treatises, often towards the beginning of a treatise as a justification for its inclusion. Thus, chapter 25's focus on food and currency is justified with reference to the third of the nine domains, the "eight kinds of governance" (*ba zheng* 八政), the first and second of which are "food" (*shi* 食) and

54. *Hanshu* 30.1720–21.

55. Lewis, *Writing and Authority*, chap. seven. For the characterization of the "Yiwen zhi" as "the final encyclopedic work of the Western Han," see p. 335.

56. Additional points of overlap include the *Zhouyi* quotation at *Hanshu* 30.1704 and (unmarked) 21a.961, and the *Lunyu* 12/7 quotation at 30.1762–63 and 23.1081–82.

57. For a study of the "Hong fan," see Michael Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original "Great Plan" and Later Readings* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1992). See especially p. 46 for the observation that "the 'Great Plan' was ideally suited to would-be systematizers … The nine sections of the 'Great Plan," in short, could easily be made to reveal in condensed form the main tenets of that amalgam known as Han Confucianism. With its reference to wu-hsing, its insistence on correct behavior, and its enumeration of specific portents, the 'Plan' provided its students with a microcosmic outline of universal patterns." On the central importance of the "Great Plan"-based conception of the wu xing to Ban Gu's project, see Clark, *Ban Gu's History of Early China*, 159–66.

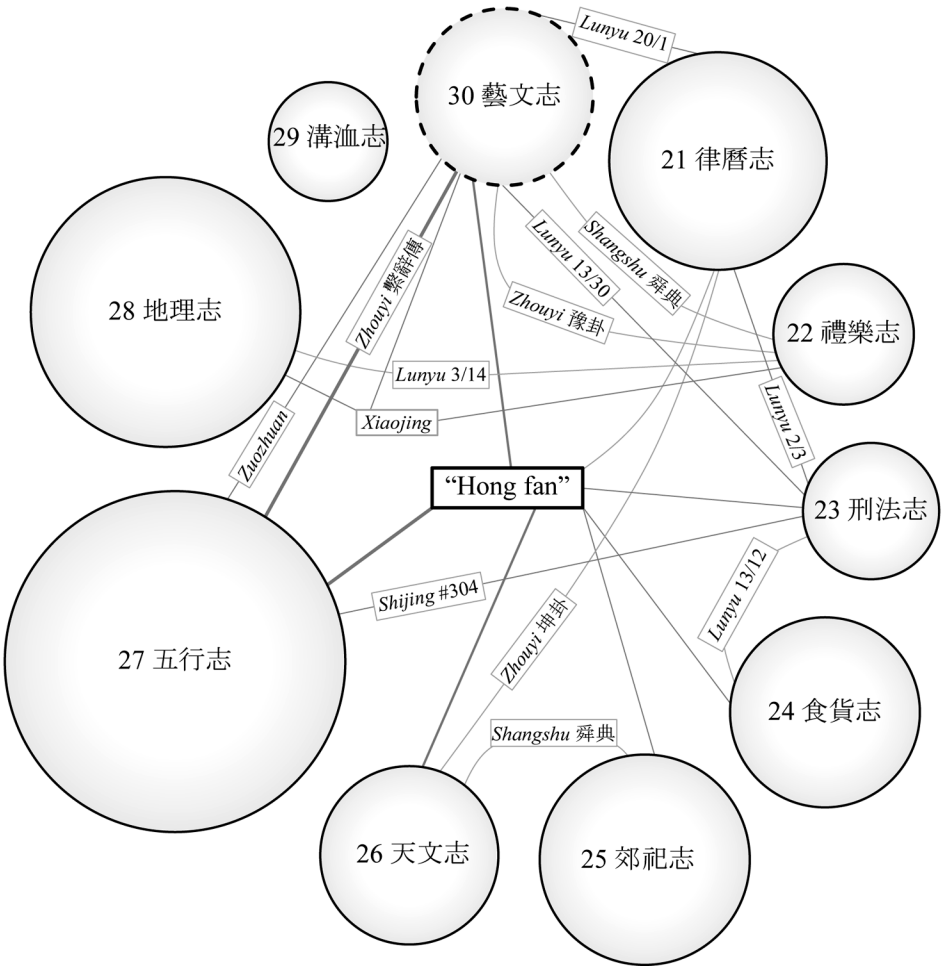

Fig. 2. Shared quotations across the ten *Hanshu* treatises (with the area of each circle proportional to the size of the treatise).

"currency" (*huo* 貨).[58] In the "Yiwen zhi," the "Hong fan" is invoked in its descriptions of agriculturists (1/9), military writings (4/), and texts dealing with the five phases (5/3) and milfoil and plastron divination (5/4).

The "Hong fan" was of particular interest to Liu Xiang and Liu Xin. As noted above, chapter 27 says of Liu Xiang that he "mastered the *Guliang* version of the *Annals*, enumerated its inauspicious and auspicious [omens], and composed a commentary to the text using the 'Hong fan'" 治穀梁春秋，數其禍福，傳以洪範. The "Yiwen zhi" also attributes a *Wuxing zhuanji* 五行傳記 (Commentary and Records of the Five Phases) text in eleven fascicles to Liu Xiang, which his *Hanshu* biography describes as follows:

> [Liu] Xiang saw the "Hong fan" chapter of the *Exalted Documents*, wherein the Viscount of Ji presented King Wu with an exposition of the responses of the five phases, yin and yang, and favorable and unfavorable omens. Xiang then gathered together the records of signs, omens, and

58. *Hanshu* 24.1117.

> strange happenings from ancient times through the Spring and Autumn and Six Kingdom eras, traced the conduct and affairs [of the relevant personages], commented on their auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, indicated the results of divinations, and categorized each entry to compose a *Commentary to the Five Phases of the Great Plan* in eleven fascicles, which he submitted to the throne.
> 向見尚書洪範，箕子為武王陳五行陰陽休咎之應。〔四〕向乃集合上古以來歷春秋六國至秦漢符瑞災異之記，推跡行事，連傳禍福，著其占驗，比類相從，各有條目，凡十一篇，號曰洪範五行傳論，奏之。[59]

A second Liu Xiang-authored text listed in the "Yiwen zhi" is *Ji yi* 稽疑 (Resolving Doubts; one fascicle), evidently named after the seventh of the nine domains of the "Hong fan."[60] Chapter 27 records approvingly that Liu Xin identified the "Great Plan" as the legendary *Luo shu* 洛書 (Writing of the Luo [River]) diagram that appeared to the sage-king Yu after he had tamed the floodwaters.[61] Thus it would seem that Ban Gu's use of the "Hong fan" as rhetorical scaffolding for the ten *Hanshu* treatises was inspired in large part by the Lius' use of the text decades earlier.[62] Moreover, to the extent that certain *Hanshu* treatises overlap with the treatises of Sima Qian's *Shiji*, the absence of "Hong fan" quotations in the corresponding *Shiji* chapters indicates that they were integral to Ban Gu's vision but not to Sima Qian's.[63]

Terminology

The ten treatises describe themselves and the activities that led to their composition in strikingly similar terms. The opening section of the "Yiwen zhi" says of Liu Xin that he "synthesized the various texts [collated by Liu Xiang] and memorialized them as the *Qilüe*" 歆於是總群書而奏其七略, before summarizing Ban Gu's own contribution in a mere eight characters: "Now [the present text] pares down [the *Qilüe*] to its essentials so as to provide a complete account of archived writings" 今刪其要，以備篇籍. On the one hand, the "Yiwen zhi" was meant to "provide a complete account" (*bei* 備) of its subject matter; on the other, completeness did not entail maximum comprehensiveness, but was instead a matter of "reducing" (*shan* 刪) the *Qilüe* to its "essentials."

Other treatises also highlight the challenge of balancing the essentials and the particulars, or the "roots and branches" (*benmo* 本末), so as to provide an appropriately complete account of a topic. In at least one instance, that standard led Ban Gu to supplement someone else's work. According to chapter 28, Zhu Gong's survey of local customs "was not [sufficiently] expansive or detailed, thus [in composing this chapter Ban Gu] gathered together and assessed [the unfinished sections in order to] complete it from root to branch" 猶未宣究，故輯而論之，終其本末著於篇.[64] Ban Gu did not shy away from noting such failures,

59. *Hanshu* 36.1949–50.

60. *Hanshu* 30.1706.

61. *Hanshu* 27.1315, where the passage in question is preceded by the "Xici zhuan" 繫辭傳 (Commentary to the Appended Phrases) quotation identifying the "Luo shu" as an auspicious omen. See also Nylan, *Shifting Center*, 56–59, on the late Western Han as a crucial stage in the transformation of the "Great Plan" "from administrative manual to sacred 'classic'" (p. 56).

62. The "Hong fan" was also invoked by a number of officials and emperors from the late Western Han onward. See, e.g., the Emperor Cheng edict dated to 21 BCE at *Hanshu* 10.314 and the Emperor Ai edict at *Hanshu* 75.3193.

63. The complex relationship between the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* treatises is not entirely germane to the issue at hand. The primary points of overlap between the two sets of treatises are a handful of *Shiji* 30 excerpts in *Hanshu* 24, the *Shiji* 28 excerpts in *Hanshu* 25, a *Shiji* 27 excerpt in *Hanshu* 26, and a lengthy *Shiji* 29 excerpt in *Hanshu* 29. As *Shiji* chapter 24, the "Yue shu" 樂書 (Treatise on Music), was reportedly lost at an early stage in the *Shiji*'s transmission (see Zhang Yan's 張晏 comment to Sima Qian's biography at *Hanshu* 62.2724–25), its overlap with *Hanshu* 22 might represent textual borrowing from the latter. For a summary of these connections, see Clark, *Ban Gu's History of Early China*, 41–43.

64. *Hanshu* 28b.1640.

even when the fault lay with the Han imperium. The treatise on ritual and music tells the history of its subject as an ongoing struggle to regain the "grand completeness" (*da bei* 大備) of the Zhou dynasty, which "inspected the [previous] two dynasties" and whose "rituals and cultural patterns were exceedingly complete" 監於二代，禮文尤具. Beginning with Emperor Gaozu's 高祖 (r. 202–195 BCE) order to Shusun Tong 叔孫通 to "institute rituals and ceremonies" 制禮儀, a project that was "not fully completed" 未盡備,[65] various Han emperors and scholar-officials sought to perfect the Han ritual regime, with mixed results:

> Now the Great Han has carried on from the Zhou but for a long time has neglected the great rites and failed to establish ritual or perfect music. This is what led men like Jia Yi, [Dong] Zhongshu, and Liu Xiang to vent their frustrations and intensify their sighs.
> 今大漢繼周，久曠大儀，未有立禮成樂，此賈宜誼、仲舒、王吉、劉向之徒所為發憤而增嘆也。[66]

Thus, knowledge systematizers like Ban Gu and Liu Xiang managed to maintain a critical distance from the state even as they worked on its behalf, thus preserving their authority as critics and remonstrators. Unlike the "Hong fan" and other canonical models of schematic thinking, the latter-day "Great Plan" of the Han was presented as an ongoing effort to bring contemporary governance into line with classical ideals.

In at least two other instances, the treatises criticize the imperium for excessive completeness. Regarding Wang Mang's summons of over a hundred experts in pitch standards in 3 CE, Ban Gu in chapter 21 criticized the resulting account as "having discussed [pitch standards] with maximum detail" 言之最詳. "Thus," Ban Gu explains, "I have excised its false phrases and taken [only] its correct meanings to compose [this] chapter" 故刪其偽辭，取正義，著于篇.[67] Wang Mang again invited Ban Gu's criticism towards the end of chapter 25, in a section detailing his support of local sacrifices:

> Wang Mang revered excessive sacrifices to ghosts and spirits, and towards the end of his reign sacrificed to Heaven, Earth, and the Six Ancestors down through various lesser ghosts and spirits at a total of 1,700 locations with pigs, sheep, oxen, and more than 3,000 kinds of birds and beasts. Afterwards he was unable to completely provide for them, and so he used chickens as substitutes for wild fowl and dogs for antlered animals.
> 莽遂崇鬼神淫祀，至其末年，自天地六宗以下至諸小鬼神，凡千七百所，用三牲鳥獸三千餘種。後不能備，乃以雞當鴈鶉，犬當麋鹿。數下詔自以當僊，語在其傳。[68]

Elsewhere, chapter 23 quotes two emperors who lamented the "proliferation and excessiveness" (*fan duo* 煩多) of Han legal codes, and even criticizes the Eastern Han imperium for its failure to rectify punishments.[69] In such instances, *bei* was not simply a matter of presenting a topic with the appropriate level of detail. Excessive completeness also had significant real-world consequences.

Yet another connection has to do with the term *lüe* 略, which is often translated as "summary" or "epitome" in the context of Liu Xin's *Qilüe*. However, in various passages throughout the ten treatises and elsewhere, *lüe* clearly refers to the surveying and/or demarcation of territory, often in the context of territorial acquisition.[70] To *lüe* is not just to engage in the conceptual or rhetorical act of summarizing or abbreviating a text or subject. It is also to

65. *Hanshu* 22.1029–30. Note the allusion to *Lunyu* 3/14.
66. *Hanshu* 22.1075,
67. *Hanshu* 21a.955.
68. *Hanshu* 25b.1270.
69. *Hanshu* 23.1103, 1110.
70. See also *Mengzi* 3A/3, *Zuozhuan* Yin 5, the line 成帝時劉向略言其地分 in *Hanshu* 28.

appropriate and to impose boundaries on a domain, be it territorial or conceptual. A canonical precedent for this "surveying" function was the "Yu gong" 禹貢 (Tribute of Yu) chapter of the *Shangshu*, a text which describes Yu's "division" (*fu* 敷) of the realm into "nine provinces" (*jiu zhou* 九州) and which is quoted at length in the treatise on geography.[71] Although not explicitly labeled as such, another example of a *lüe* text is the "Hong fan" with its demarcation of the "nine domains" (*jiu chou* 九疇) of royal knowledge.[72]

In keeping with this tradition, Ban Gu explicitly described several treatises (or the activities that led to their creation) as "surveys." The summary of chapter 28 cites the precedent of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝 and Yao 堯, who "ruled and surveyed the 10,000 polities, harmonized and settled east and west, and demarcated and ordered north and south" 經略萬國，燮定東西，疆理南北, before going on to claim that the treatise "surveyed and arrayed the mountains and rivers [so as to] display their divisions" 略表山川，彰其剖判.[73] Other "surveyed" subjects include pitch standards in chapter 21, rituals in chapter 22, armies and laws in chapter 23, stars in chapter 26, the territorial divisions of the empire in chapter 28, and experts in flood management in chapter 29, in addition to the six major divisions of the "Yiwen zhi."[74]

According to the "Yiwen zhi" prologue, the decision to label its major divisions as "surveys" was made by Liu Xin decades prior to Ban Gu's composition of the *Hanshu*. Whether that decision inspired Ban Gu to describe other encyclopedic activities in similar terms, or whether it was simply a feature of encyclopedic discourse in the period, the larger point remains: there was nothing particularly distinctive about the "surveys" of the "Yiwen zhi," at least from the perspective of the *Hanshu*. Taken together, the treatises' terminological coherence, their reliance on a common set of canonical texts and quotations, and their participation in a grander narrative featuring a recurring cast of characters (emperors, Liu Xiang, Liu Xin) reveal that Ban Gu conceived of these chapters as mutually complementary contributions to a larger encyclopedic endeavor anchored to the "Hong fan."

A "GREAT PLAN" FOR BOOKS

Having traced the connections among the ten *Hanshu* treatises, we are now in a better position to understand the distinctive features of the "Yiwen zhi" within that larger complex. How do book knowledge and textual mastery differ from other kinds of knowledge and expertise? And what problems did the "surveying" of texts pose versus that of celestial bodies, territories, etc.?

One such feature is the bibliography's emphasis on Kongzi, beginning with the argument of the opening lines that the study of the classics is, at its core, an effort to recover the "great principles" (*da yi* 大義) of the classics as understood and enshrined by the sage. To be sure, Kongzi is an important figure throughout the ten treatises and other *Hanshu* chapters.[75]

71. For this use of *lüe* in the "Yu gong," see *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 ed. (hereafter *SBCK*), 3/2b, which is quoted at *Hanshu* 28a.1526.

72. Given that the "Hong fan" and "Yu gong" are among the most systematically organized texts in the *Shangshu*, the mention of Yu and floods (*hongshui* 洪水) in the former might be read as an allusion to the latter, with the "nine [conceptual] domains" of the "Hong fan" modeled on the "nine provinces" of the "Yu gong."

73. *Hanshu* 100b.4243–44.

74. *Hanshu* 22.1045 (略論律呂), 23.1081–82, 1103–04, 25b.1270, 26.1290, 28b.1640, and 29.1696–97. See also *Hanshu* 100b.4244 for Ban Gu's description of Liu Xiang as having "surveyed and arranged" 略序 the imperial archives.

75. The one exception is chapter 26 on "heavenly patterns." Apparently, Kongzi's astronomical or astrological acumen was less important than his expertise in other fields.

Especially toward the beginning of a treatise, Kongzi is often referenced or quoted to establish a topic's importance. However, the "Yiwen zhi" not only accounts for roughly half of the ninety Kongzi mentions throughout the treatises, it is also the only chapter that opens with Kongzi, effectively beginning in medias res without tracing the history of its subject back to earlier sage-kings or, like the *Zhouyi*, to Fu Xi 伏羲 as the inventor of the hexagrams.[76] The summary of the "Yiwen zhi" found in the concluding chapter of the *Hanshu* first lists Fu Xi and Xie 契, the inventor of characters, followed by the Yu 虞, Xia 夏, Shang 商, and Zhou 周 dynasties before coming to Kongzi, a sequence more consistent with the rhetoric of the ten treatises as a whole.[77]

Kongzi's special status within the "Yiwen zhi" probably represents a conceit on the part of its compilers, who saw themselves as performing a similar role as Kongzi. His significance in the "Yiwen zhi" is as the grand authenticator of the canon as a whole, the figure who was thought to have transformed the disorganized and unauthenticated traditions of the *Changes*, *Documents*, *Odes*, etc., into the unified curriculum of the Six Classics. In Liu Xin's pithy summation,

> Worrying that the Way would not be practiced, Kongzi traveled throughout the [central] states in answer to their invitations. After he returned to Lu from Wei, music was rectified and the *Court Odes* and *Ritual Hymns* [of the *Odes*] obtained their proper places. He revised the *Changes*, arranged the *Documents*, and composed the *Annals* so as to record the Way of emperors and kings.
> 孔子憂道之不行，歷國應聘。自衛反魯，然後樂正，雅頌乃得其所；修易，序書，制作春秋，以紀帝王之道。[78]

Likewise, the role of the "Yiwen zhi" within the ten treatises was to authenticate the classics upon which other encyclopedic projects were founded, at least rhetorically. Additional evidence of this role can be found in the organization of the "Yiwen zhi" itself. The importance of "elementary learning" to the compilers of the "Yiwen zhi " can be seen in its size relative to other subdivisions (see Figure 1). At 530 characters, its prose summary is hundreds of characters longer than that of any other, including the introduction (267) and the summary of the "Six Arts" (230), despite having the second-lowest *pian*/*juan* count (45 *pian*) of any section in the bibliography.[79] Just as the "elementary learning" subdivision comes at the end of the "Six Arts" and lists the lexicographical and paleographical works that facilitated the analysis and interpretation of other ancient sources, the "Yiwen zhi" validates the texts and traditions invoked within the first nine treatises. It is tempting to speculate that Ban Gu modeled the ten treatises of the *Hanshu* on the nine domains of the "Hong fan," with the supplementary "Yiwen zhi" acting not unlike the concluding bibliography in a modern book.[80]

Given the larger role of the "Yiwen zhi" within the *Hanshu*, it is also worth considering how these larger rhetorical and/or ideological imperatives might have played out on the micro level. To take one example: the "Yiwen zhi" is perhaps our earliest source for the claim that the *Lunyu* is a record of Kongzi's teachings compiled by his closest students, a

76. "Xici zhuan xia" (*SBCK* 8/2a).

77. *Hanshu* 100b.4244.

78. *Hanshu* 36.1968.

79. The subdivision with the lowest count is the *mingjia* 名家 (terminologists; 2/5), at 35 *pian*.

80. My thanks to the anonymous reviewer who encouraged this line of argumentation. As noted by that reviewer, the influence of the "Hong fan" might explain a key difference between the structure of the *Hanshu* (twelve basic annals, eight tables, ten treatises, seventy biographies) and that of the *Shiji* (twelve basic annals, ten tables, eight treatises, thirty accounts of the pre-imperial hereditary households, seventy biographies), which flips the number of tables and treatises.

claim that continues to underwrite the *Lunyu*'s status as the preeminent source of Kongzi.[81] Given that the *Lunyu* is quoted as often as any canonical text across the ten treatises (x48), one wonders whether Ban Gu was free to represent it as anything other than an authentic record of Kongzi's teachings, lest he undermine the rhetorical foundations of other surveys and, by extension, the legitimacy of the Han imperium itself.[82]

Also like Kongzi, the compilers of the "Yiwen zhi" might have been less successful than they might have hoped. If we rank the treatises according to their "completeness," at one end of the spectrum are the treatises on standards (21), geography (28), and waterways (29), which express few if any doubts regarding the completeness of their systems, with the treatises on rituals (22) and laws (23) at the other end. Against this backdrop, the willingness of the "Yiwen zhi" authors to acknowledge gaps in the textual record—for instance, works for which "there is a listing but no text"—is unsurprising. Nor is it surprising to encounter narratives of decline, the rhetorical payoff of which was establishing Han emperors and officials as saviors of the tradition. Even so, the bibliography's opening lament for the loss of Kongzi and his *dizi* 弟子 (students) and the schisms resulting from "the cutting off of [Kongzi's] subtle sayings" 微言絕 and the "splitting of his great principles" 大義乖 is remarkable for its pessimism. The opening sections of other treatises describe the accomplishments of ancient sages like Fu Xi, the Yellow Emperor, Yao, Shun 舜, and Yu before introducing their own decline narratives, or else they begin with a theoretical discussion of a topic's intrinsic importance, thereby conveying a greater sense of optimism regarding the knowability and recoverability of ritual, music, laws, etc. Not so with the "Yiwen zhi"—why?

If the "Hong fan" was Ban Gu's model for the systematic presentation of knowledge about pitch standards, rituals, music, celestial bodies, etc., then the opening lament of the "Yiwen zhi" might be read as an acknowledgement of the difficulties inherent in applying that model to book knowledge. Stars, provinces, rivers, calendrical calculations—these domains are perfectly amenable to schematic representation, as the *Hanshu* treatises demonstrate so well. But book knowledge is another matter. Books are material objects that convey non-material texts on various kinds of media (bamboo, silk, wood, stone, bronze) in various different formats—hence the need for Liu Xiang's editorial interventions. Books are also fragile and can be lost or damaged or destroyed, as the story of the Qin book proscription and bibliocaust illustrated so well.[83] Books can prompt multiple competing interpretations, thus frustrating their classification. Although early Chinese manuscripts typically omit such information, they also have authors and chronologies and participate in oeuvres, all of which impact their classification. Perhaps not coincidentally, the "Yiwen zhi" is the only *Hanshu* treatise to acknowledge that certain basic facts—the author or chronology of a book, for instance—were "unknown." In short, book knowledge was messy in a way that other epistemological domains were not. Consequently, the successful presentation of book knowledge in the *Hanshu* demanded a degree of "control"—a set of rules for determining what information to include, and how to include it—far exceeding other *Hanshu* treatises, let alone the "Hong fan" ideal.[84]

81. *Hanshu* 30.1717. A single *Bielu* fragment recorded in the preface to Xing Bing's 邢昺 (932–1010) *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (*SBCK* 1/1a) makes a similar claim in a condensed form.

82. For further discussion, see Hunter, *Confucius beyond the* Analects (Leiden: Brill, 2017), chapter three.

83. For that story, see *Shiji* 6.254–55 and also Petersen, "Which Books Did the First Emperor of Ch'in Burn?" My thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this observation.

84. For a discussion of the problem of bibliographic control, see Patrick Wilson, *Two Kinds of Power: An Essay on Bibliographical Control* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1968), chapter one ("The Bibliographical Universe").

From this perspective, the wording of the bibliography's opening lament acquires a greater significance. The "splitting" (*guai* 乖) of Kongzi's "great principles" (*da yi* 大義),[85] the "division" (*fen* 分) of the classics into multiple interpretive traditions, the "struggle" (*zheng* 爭) between the "true and false" (*zhen wei* 真偽), and the "confusion and chaos" (*fenran xiaolan* 紛然殽亂) of the masters' teachings—all of these terms highlight the challenge of controlling an irreducibly messy and miscellaneous body of materials.[86] The "Yiwen zhi" introduction is not a standard narrative of decline, nor is it merely a complaint about lost or incomplete knowledge such as we find in other treatises. It is an expression of the frustration experienced by knowledge systematizers like Ban Gu (and probably also Liu Xin) at the challenge of schematizing book knowledge as fully or as crisply as other domains.

* * *

Herein lies the irony of the text's status as the earliest extant bibliography in the East Asian tradition. Not only was the work that made the "Yiwen zhi" possible undertaken by polymaths for whom bibliography was but a single aspect of their official portfolios, bibliography as presented by Ban Gu was far from an autonomous activity. Ban Gu's great contribution to the establishment of bibliography as a discipline was to carve out a space for book knowledge alongside calendrics, astronomy, omenology, geography, and other domains as part of a Han imperial "Great Plan." However, in shoehorning book knowledge into a "Hong fan"-based template, he effectively subordinated the "Yiwen zhi" to that larger project, as evidenced by the text's pessimism, unevenness, and minimalistic presentation.

Barring the unlikely rediscovery of the *Bielu* or *Qilüe*, the "Yiwen zhi" will no doubt maintain its status as the most indispensable source for the study of the early Chinese textual heritage. For all its limitations, the "Yiwen zhi" is still our earliest and most comprehensive guide to that tradition in the latter part of the Western Han, at a time when Liu Xiang and others were editing or compiling so many of the texts which have survived to the present day.[87] That is all the more reason why students and scholars of the early period must approach the "Yiwen zhi" with the utmost care and precision, lest its idiosyncracies distort our picture of the period as a whole. When looking to the "Yiwen zhi" for information about a particular text or author, one cannot treat it as a straightforward reference work. After doing one's philological due diligence and consulting the necessary commentaries, relevant fragments of the *Bielu* and *Qilüe*, etc., one must then consider its role within Ban Gu's vision of the Han imperial "Great Plan." The greater the role, the greater the likelihood that it was subordinated to more fundamental rhetorical imperatives. Perhaps after disentangling the bibliography from the "Great Plan" of the Han one might be in a better position to use the "Yiwen zhi" as source of Han or even pre-Han textual traditions.

85. For the translation of *guai* 乖 as "split," see, e.g., the phrase "ruler and subject split and divided, superiors and inferiors resentful in their interactions" 君臣乖離，上下交怨 at *Hanshu* 27e.1508–09, one among many passages in the *Hanshu* and elsewhere in which the word indicates a division between groups or categories that are naturally complementary.

86. Li Ling (*Lantai wanzhang*, 2–3) has suggested that the introduction's lament for the diversification of commentarial traditions was a *guwen* 古文 (ancient script) scholar's critique of *jinwen* 今文 (modern script) traditions, and thus a call to return to the oldest and most authentic texts.

87. Compare Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," 822: "the treatise's classification scheme is not an accurate guide to the social and intellectual affiliations of the men who produced and transmitted the literature, but this in no way diminishes its primary value as our only comprehensive record of the literature itself."