THE BOOK MULTIPLE: TREATISE ON MILITARY PREPAREDNESS (1621) AND ENCYCLOPEDIC PRACTICE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA

by

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Abstract

In 1621, with Jurchen armies threatening Ming China’s (1368–1644) northeastern border, Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594–1640) finished a compendium titled *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 (Treatise on military preparedness). In response to rapidly changing social, intellectual, economic, and political circumstances in early-seventeenth-century Chinese society, elites produced increasing numbers of technical compendia on statecraft and concrete studies.

Scholars have argued that encyclopedias in seventeenth-century China reflected epistemic changes analogous to the new emphasis on empiricism and information collection in early modern Europe, but have not explained the intellectual and social practices that produced these tomes, their compilers’ epistemic assumptions that shaped these practices, and contemporary notions of technical expertise. Using *Wu bei zhi* as a case study, this dissertation asks what practices specific to the late Ming dynasty produced books like *Wu bei zhi* and enacted the figure of the expert compiler. It explores what assumptions about knowledge and expertise underwrote these practices, and how the practices and objects they enacted changed over time.

Drawing on the ontological and practice turns in critical theory, especially the work of Annemarie Mol, and on methods in the history of the book, especially reader response criticism, I argue that *Wu bei zhi* is a multiple yet coherent epistemic and material object produced through changing social and intellectual practices. Chapter 2 describes the citation and information organization practices used in *Wu bei zhi*; Chapter 3 examines the social practices in Mao Yuanyi’s correspondence; Chapter 4 examines the printed punctuation in *Wu bei zhi*; Chapter 5 compares these practices to those observable in other contemporary statecraft compendia; and Chapter 6 examines the responses of later readers to *Wu bei zhi* and material evidence of reading.
practices in surviving late-Qing dynasty (1644–1911) copies of the text. Ultimately, I argue that late-Ming practices of citation, information organization, punctuation, and interpersonal communication enacted a notion of expertise dependent on mastery of textual knowledge and the ability to extrapolate that to its application in practice. Mao Yuanyi and his book mutually constructed one another as objects, though the underlying understanding of expertise changed over time.
Lay Summary

This dissertation examines a military encyclopedia from seventeenth-century China titled *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 (Treatise on military preparedness) by Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594–1640). The book was written in response to increasingly dire military troubles on the northeastern border of the Ming empire (1368–1644), and is representative of new ideas about what it meant to be an expert in this period. Mao comprehensively collected information about the military, read it, punctuated it, and then promoted his work to shape his own identity. The way Mao went about creating the book and promoting it show us that late-Ming, elite readers defined expertise as the mastery of a group of texts, and the ability to at least imagine how to apply this information in practice. These practices of reading, writing, and discussing eventually tied the name “Mao Yuanyi” and title “*Wu bei zhi*” inextricably together.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished work by the author, Sarah A. G. Basham.
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List of Abbreviations

**GJK**  

**HYDCD**  

**SKDCD**  

**SKJH**  

**SKCM**  

**SKWS**  

**SS**  

**SSJ**  

**XXSK**  
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奉給 Staggers 老師與李老師，我的引路人。
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 How to be a Book

This is not a dissertation about military affairs. There will be no discussion of the efficacy of cannons, guns, or crossbows, and there will be no judgment rendered on the efficacy of strategies and tactics culled from ancient texts. While the topic of this dissertation is, nominally, a military treatise, its project is not to ask what the book’s content tells about military science in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), but rather what the book itself was, how it cohered, and how it did not. This dissertation dissects the nature of one book, specifically, *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 (Treatise on military preparedness, 1621), an encyclopedic book printed in the early seventeenth century, likely in Gui’an County 歸安縣, of Huzhou Prefecture 湖州府, Zhejiang Province 浙江省, China. *Wu bei zhi* was firmly ensconced in a burgeoning set of scholarly practices used to compile and evaluate “practical,” “concrete” knowledge relevant to the well-being of the Ming state. This dissertation asks what the scholarly practices of its compiler and readers can tell us about the epistemic object and material object that is the title *Wu bei zhi* and the expert identity of its compiler, Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594–1640).

*Wu bei zhi* is most often described as a military treatise or encyclopedia. This description raises more questions than it answers. In the late Ming, what was a treatise? Is the term “encyclopedia” applicable or anachronistic? How was it built? How was it read? What work

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1 Borrowing a phrase from Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*.
2 “Treatise” is the translation most often used for the Chinese word *zhi* 志, which refers to a text recounting historical events. *Wu bei zhi* contains excerpts from historical sources, but its contents are not limited to such sources.
did it do in the minds of readers? In society? When we invoke the title, *Wu bei zhi*, we invoke both the many extant material objects (books) that bear this title in North America, Japan, Taiwan, and China, and an amorphous idea of a single “text” whose contents and structure are basically the same across space and time. The surviving material objects in libraries are at once both a singular thing, the title (text), *Wu bei zhi*, and also a plurality of physical books. The questions outlined above help us to investigate this tense relationship between the multiplicity of the physical book and the singularity of its title. I will argue that studying the minute practices that made *Wu bei zhi*, both the title and its imprints, helps us to understand the answers to these questions, and therefore the nature of this book in both the Ming and beyond. These practices caused the title “*Wu bei zhi*” and its author “Mao Yuanyi” to cohere as epistemic objects in the minds of Ming readers. Through these practices *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi came to embody a late-Ming understanding of expertise dependent on the mastery of textual knowledge and the potential application of that knowledge in policy and practice. As the practices of its readers changed over time, the material and immaterial *Wu bei zhi(s)* proliferated, multiplied, and changed. Today, the title “*Wu bei zhi*” has grown to be a different object from its Ming manifestation. We will investigate this after establishing what *Wu bei zhi* was to its contemporaries. This dissertation will first build, practice by practice, an understanding of *Wu bei zhi* as a coherent epistemic object, and, at its very end, explode this epistemic object into its plural processes of constant making and remaking.

Inspiration for thinking of *Wu bei zhi* as both material and epistemic object built through compilation and reading practices comes from a number of theoretical literatures. The strategies for dealing with *Wu bei zhi* as a plural or “multiple” but coherent object are drawn primarily from the work of Annemarie Mol’s *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, hence the
dissertation’s title. These will be discussed in depth below. However, the idea of *Wu bei zhi* and its compiler as explosively messy and “living documents”\(^3\) is inspired by the knotty nature of publishing, print culture, military affairs, politics, urbanity, consumer culture, and dynastic dissolution in the late Ming. Before exploring the theoretical and methodological approaches of this study, it behooves us to recount the chaos of the late Ming and individuals’ personal approaches to making sense of it. The question of “why the Ming fell” has been integral to historical studies of the seventeenth century of all kinds—cultural, social, political, economic, and military, to name just a few.\(^4\) Lately, scholars have turned away from asking “why the Ming fell” and now ask “why the Ming lasted as long as it did.”\(^5\) My interest lies in neither, but rather in the intersection of individuals’ perceptions of cultural, intellectual, and political chaos between 1600 and 1644, and scholarly praxis and the production of technical knowledge in response to that chaos.

1.2 *Taming Chaos: the Context*

Many studies exist of different kinds of tumult in the late Ming and perceptions thereof. Early seventeenth-century China was fraught with internal political strife and external incursions from the Northeast, in particular, the Jurchen armies of the “Later Jin” (1616–1636) soon to be selfstyled “Manchus” who would take over the lands of the fallen Ming empire in 1644 and form the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). In 1618 and 1619, the Later Jin defeated Ming armies at

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\(^3\) The idea of the book as a “living document” comes from Dennis, *Writing, Publishing, and Reading*, 10.

\(^4\) For various theories of why the Ming fell, see, for example, Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline*; Zhao, “A Decade of Considerable Significance,” 112–113; Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty*; Nimick, *Local Administration in Ming China*.

Fushun and Sarhu, dominating key cities northeast of the Ming dynasty’s Great Wall.\(^6\) Two years later, after presiding over this humiliating defeat and a divisive succession controversy, the Wanli emperor (r. 1573–1620) died.\(^7\) His eldest son, the Taichang emperor (1582–1620), reigned for only a month before he, too, died. His successor, the Tianqi emperor (r. 1621–1627), presided over a peak in factional deadlock in the civil bureaucracy and dysfunctional responses to the still active Manchu armies in the Northeast. Factional lines were drawn between the self-righteous representatives of gentry authority, the Donglin partisans (\textit{Donglin dang 東林党}), and those who favored government by a strong central state, including Tianqi’s eunuch adviser, Wei Zhongxian (1568–1627).\(^8\) Corruption in the bureaucracy was endemic, as few officials, whether local or central, could survive on the salary provided, nor could they manage to extract the taxes demanded by the imperial government.\(^9\) The Ming defeat in Liaodong in 1618 and the subsequent instability of the court boded ill for the dynasty, which continued to struggle against the Later Jin throughout the 1620s. Taxes fell into arrears, and the state coffers suffered; the state’s armies lacked sufficient troops and the money to feed the few they had. Extreme cold, drought, and locusts plagued the last years of the Ming dynasty, and crop failures led to a decade of famine from 1632–1641, culminating in the peasant rebellions in

\(^6\) Ibid., 244. For an account of the events of 1618 and 1619, see Swope, \textit{The Military Collapse of China’s Ming Dynasty}, 11–33.

\(^7\) For a detailed account of the succession controversy, see Huang, \textit{1587: A Year of No Significance}.

\(^8\) John Dardess and Harry Miller both give accounts of the partisan conflict of the 1620s and 1630s. The characterization of the conflict described here is Miller’s. See Dardess, \textit{Blood and History in China}, and Miller, \textit{State Versus Gentry in Late Ming Dynasty China, 1572–1644}.

\(^9\) On built-in obstacles to meeting the demands of survival and central government taxation, see Nimick, \textit{Local Administration In Ming}, and Swope, \textit{The Military Collapse of China’s Ming Dynasty}, 30. Swope describes corruption as “institutionalized” in this period.
the 1630s. Soon, the dynasty faced military disaster on multiple fronts. Although it would be Manchu armies that established a new dynasty, it would be the peasant rebellions that caused the capital city to fall in 1644.

All this said, the fall of the Ming state was hardly inevitable, and scions of wealthy, gentry families in the Southeast, like Mao Yuanyi, worried extensively about the military and fiscal struggles of the state and its longevity. Increasing numbers of literati spent their lives trying to pass the civil examinations and maintain their family’s gentry status or achieve employment in the civil bureaucracy, but a smaller and smaller proportion of these men succeeded. By the early seventeenth century, only 2.6% of candidates would pass provincial examinations, and of those who passed, only 6.4% of those candidates would then pass the metropolitan examinations and move on to the palace examinations, the last step before obtaining the most advanced degree possible (jinshi 进士). The Ming civil service never did expand to include the increasing numbers of unemployed, highly educated members of the literati class who studied for the exams. Excluded from civil-service employment, idle members of the educated elite sought other means of financial and social survival in the urban spaces of the Southeast.

10 On the peak of the Little Ice Age in the seventeenth-century in China, other environmental disasters, and the “Nine Sloughs” of the Yuan and Ming dynasties, see Brook, The Troubled Empire, 50–78, especially 53–55, 68–71.
11 See Parsons, Peasant Rebellions of the Late Ming Dynasty and Swope, The Military Collapse of China’s Ming Dynasty, especially chapters 4–7 and pp. 199–203.
12 Elman, A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Imperial China, 143, 653.
13 Ibid., xvi–xvii, 125–30, 142–44. Elman writes that by the late Ming, classically literate men were abundant, but most classically literate men did not pass the high level examinations.
Men of Mao Yuanyi’s class alternately worried about and reveled in the “urban glamour and material decadence” of cities like Nanjing, where Mao spent much of his youth.\(^{14}\) The transition from the Hongwu emperor’s (r. 1368–1398) vision of “rural self-sufficiency” to the increasingly commercialized and urban economy of the seventeenth century left many literati coping with a degree of cognitive dissonance and “disappointment at having to live in declining times.”\(^{15}\) Considerable literature exists on coping mechanisms for literati like Mao Yuanyi and the alternative career paths they pursued, whether parallel to or outside of traditional bureaucratic appointments via the examinations.\(^{16}\) In Nanjing, literati formed poetry clubs and watched dramas; they hired and married courtesans, and participated in moralizing lectures on neo-Confucian philosophy and the failures of the bureaucracy. The commercialized economy of these spaces was full of objects, valuable and otherwise: porcelains, paintings, calligraphy, furniture, clothing—the detritus of a commercialized culture. Books were no exception, and it was to writing and editing books for printing that many literati turned as an alternative or supplemental means of material support. Chen Guanzhi argues that book markets in Nanjing were incredibly robust in the Wanli period, the end of which coincided with Mao Yuanyi’s decade in and out of the city.\(^{17}\)

\(^{14}\) Fei, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 1.

\(^{15}\) Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, xvii, 12.

\(^{16}\) See, for example, Peterson, *Bitter Gourd: Fang I-CHIH and the Impetus for Intellectual Change*; Chang and Chang, *Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China*; Elman, *Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*; Zhao Yuan, *Zhidu yanlun xintai*; Lin, “In the Name of Honor: Qian Qianyi (1582–1664) and the Politics of Loyalty in Late Imperial China;” Wang Hung-tai, “Wugong, wuxue, wuyi, wuxia.”

Most scholars agree that woodblock prints began to outnumber manuscripts by the early Ming. Writings of all genres proliferated beginning in the sixteenth century, driven by the growing demand of an increasingly literate pool of failed examination candidates and their social equals. Exam preparation guides, medical texts, fiction, daily use encyclopedias, ledgers of merit and demerit, and illustrated books of all kinds filled the shelves of libraries in private homes and schools. In the southeastern region of Jiangnan, several cities dominated the production of woodblock-printed texts, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou in particular, with satellite industries in Huzhou, Huizhou, and Yangzhou. Publishers in Jianyang (Fujian province) provided further work for roving woodblock carvers responsible for cheap imprints and high quality carvings alike across the Southeast. Literati bought extensive collections of books on all subjects, and when they couldn’t afford to buy an imprint, they copied from friends. Increasingly, the printed book itself, knowledge, and writing were commodified, leading to the rise of what Chow Kai-wing calls “reputable masters” and Joseph McDermott calls “boss editors,” who could both pursue an official career and live off the money made writing or publishing books. Literati in China, like their counterparts in Europe, complained of information overload and expressed

19 Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*; Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*; Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China*.
20 Brokaw, *The Sibao Book Trade*, 8–9
21 Chia, *Printing for Profit*.
concerns over how to manage it. The publication of encyclopedic reference works and compilations of texts (collectanea) became common.\textsuperscript{24}

In the piles of books amassed by scholars in this period, “concrete studies” (\textit{shixue} 實學) began to take on a new importance. “Concrete studies” occasionally overlapped with “statecraft” (\textit{jingshi} 經世) writings. The former is a category that usually includes two sorts of topics: “kinds of knowledge producing tangible results to the general benefit,” and knowledge pursued using “verifiable methods.”\textsuperscript{25} Agricultural studies, perhaps medicine, engineering, and mathematics are often grouped under this category. Statecraft writings distributed technical know-how to officials and also acted as symbolic collections of the knowledge necessary to govern an empire.\textsuperscript{26} Both of these trends in scholarly writing leant themselves to the late Ming concern with “concrete

\textsuperscript{24} On the influence of print technology on intellectual culture and reading habits in Europe, see Eisenstein, \textit{The Printing Press as an Agent of Change}; Johns, \textit{The Nature of the Book}; and debates between these two authors in Grafton, Johns, and Eisenstein, “AHR Forum: How Revolutionary Was the Print Revolution?,” 84-128.

Craig Clunas writes that “Encyclopaedic knowledge was a staple of Ming publishing, including illustrated publishing…which reached to all levels of literate society and possibly beyond.” He connects this phenomenon to “an episteme in which it is the \textit{multiplication} of categories…that is the powerful creator of pattern and meaning in the world.” It is this idea, he argues, that underwrote Ming encyclopedism. See Clunas, \textit{Empire of Great Brightness}, 114–115. Benjamin Elman also describes the interest in collecting information in the late Ming. Elman, “Collecting and Classifying,” 152. Elman points us to compare the European impulse to collect information and artifacts in the early modern period described in Findlen, \textit{Possessing Nature}. We might also consider relevant work on the formation of “natural history” as a discipline: Ogilvie, \textit{The Science of Describing}, and the work of Ann Blair and Richard Yeo on information collection and management. See Blair, \textit{Too Much to Know}; Yeo, \textit{Encyclopaedic Visions}; and Yeo, \textit{Notebooks, English Virtuosi, and Early Modern Science}. In the Chinese context, we might consider connoisseurship and the collection of antiques and books. See, for example, Lee, “The Collector, the Connoisseur, and Late-Ming Sensibility,” 269–302. He Yuming discusses the collection and ordering of information about the wider world in China: He, \textit{Home and the World}, 15.

\textsuperscript{25} Jami, Engelfriet, and Blue, “Introduction,” 13.

\textsuperscript{26} Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the \textit{Nongzheng quanshu}?,” 324.
detail,” and the collection and classification of overabundant information. Encyclopedic military texts are representative of both trends. Mao Yuanyi wrote, and read, and printed, and scribbled throughout the 1610s, 1620s, and 1630s, and by 1621 had produced his own contribution to this literature, *Wu bei zhi*.

Mao Yuanyi and *Wu bei zhi* are products of this period of existential crisis, burgeoning commercialism, information overload, and literati attempts to support both their state and their own interests. Extensive scholarship in the history of the book examines the print culture of the Ming dynasty, including scholarly praxis in book production, especially encyclopedism, but little history of the book focuses on statecraft texts. Likewise, scholars have studied statecraft and concrete studies as elements in the history of science and technology, but few borrow from the methods of book historians. This study intervenes in the scholarship on statecraft literature in the late Ming, but does so by borrowing from the methodology of book historians. The former field fails to account for the problems book historians raise, and the latter does not address the question of the materiality of statecraft texts. A more detailed discussion of these literatures follows below, but first let us place Mao Yuani’s biography in the context of the Ming military struggles, burgeoning print culture and urbanity, political strife, and the scholarly response of statecraft and concrete studies.

1.3 Mao Yuanyi and *Wu bei zhi*

Mao was born in 1594 to Mao Guojin 茅國縉 (1555–1607), the second son of Mao Kun 茅坤 (1512–1601), a renowned civil official, book collector and participant in the sixteenth-

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27 Craig Clunas, as cited in Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?” 358, footnote 95.
century defense of the Southeast against piracy. Mao grew up in Gui’an County in present-day Zhejiang province. He failed the provincial examinations in Chang’an at the age of 19 (in 1612), and then moved to Nanjing, where he found friends interested in both poetry and military studies. In 1621, he failed the provincial exams again and printed *Wu bei zhi*, the 240-chapter military compendium that he claimed to have worked on for 15 years. He claimed that this was in response to increasing military trouble in the Northeast that came to a head in 1618 and 1619. In 1623, after refusing multiple offers of employment from officials, he prematurely left mourning for his late mother and took up a position as an adviser to the Minister of War, Sun Chengzong 孫承宗 (1563–1638), in the Northeast at Shanhaiguan 山海關. In 1625 he followed Sun Chengzong in pleading illness in response to increasing persecution of Donglin

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30 Jiang Na and Zhao Na both note that the claim of working on the book for 15 years, beginning in 1606 or 1607, is implausible given that Mao would have only been about 13 years old. See Jiang, “Mao Yuanyi yu *Wu bei zhi*,” 3, and Zhao, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* yanjiu,” 42.

31 Most scholarship on Mao Yuanyi or *Wu bei zhi* recounts these events. The account of Mao’s refusals is best reconstructed from his memorials refusing office and in some of the letters analyzed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. These can all be found in his collected prose writings. See Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Shimin sishi ji* 石民四十集 [Collected writings of Shimin at age 40], in *XXSK*. Hereafter, this text will be referred to as *Sishi ji* or *SSJ.*
partisans, and in 1626 was reduced to commoner status. He served again after presenting *Wu bei zhi* to the Chongzhen emperor in 1628, this time in the Hanlin Academy. He angered powerful officials, was pushed out, then served once more with Sun Chengzong as a Vice Commander-in-Chief (*Fuzongbing* 副總兵) before being exiled after his troops mutinied at Juehua Island in the late 1630s. He died in exile in Fujian before the Ming ended.

Most critical for our story are Mao’s years immediately prior to and after the printing of *Wu bei zhi*. Mao Yuanyi’s primary job in the civil service was to act as an adviser to Sun Chengzong. Between the years 1618 and 1623, in addition to pursuing a provincial (*juren* 舉人) degree in the civil examinations, he appears to have had a back-up plan to obtain a position as an adviser to highly placed civil officials who had influence over military affairs. The social practices by which he accomplished this will be explored in detail in Chapter 3, but suffice it to

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32 Jiang Na and Zhao Na both say that Mao Yuanyi was kicked out of the civil service forcibly. See Jiang, “Mao Yuanyi yu *Wu bei zhi*,” 2–3, Zhao, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* yanjiu,” 7–8. These accounts draw on the prefaces from *Wu bei zhi* by others and Mao’s on preface in *SSJ*, letters, and other accounts. Missing is Mao’s account in another preface to a poetry collection: Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Shimin youxian ji* 石民又峴集 [Collected writings of Shimin from Youxian], originally printed between 1628–1644, in SKJH, series 4, vol 110, 141–188. That said, “pleading illness” is a euphemistic way of saying that neither Sun nor Mao had much choice in leaving the service.


34 All biographical material is outlined in Zhao, Jiang, and Ren Daobin, cited above. These sources are far more detailed than the *Dictionary of Ming Biography* account. I’ve corroborated this information by consulting the original sources, and some left unconsulted by these authors. The most complete biography of Mao by a contemporary is that by Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, see Qian Qianyi, *Lie chao shi ji xiao zhu*, 591–592. Mao himself gives more clues to his biography in memorials, letters, and prefaces in his collected writings. However, as noted above, these accounts are not always consistent.
say here that he lived in Nanjing and cultivated relationships with three groups of people, (1) famous courtesans, (2) literati unaffiliated with the government but influential in publishing and poetry circles, and (3) civil officials like Sun Chengzong with either influence over the emperor or demonstrated interest in military affairs. Mao Yuanyi would reach out to many in the latter two groups to ask them to comment on and help print *Wu bei zhi*, and eventually would use *Wu bei zhi* to help find an ideal place on the front lines of the fight with the Manchu armies outside of Shanhai Pass, the critical juncture between China proper and the Northeast.

Little is known about the printing of *Wu bei zhi*. Most scholarship satisfies itself with knowing the names of the calligrapher, who wrote the characters, and the block carver of the first edition printed in 1621. Their names are printed on the first page of the first main chapter (*juan* 卷) of the book. Mao Yuanyi does not explicitly state that the book was printed by his family, but his family had extensive publishing businesses and connections in Gui’an, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Nanjing, and the book was written and printed during Mao’s time in Nanjing. The circle of friends he made during this period such as Fu Ruzhou 傅汝舟 (d. Circa 1623), Tan Youxia 譚友夏 (d. 1637), Song Xian 宋獻 (juren 1603), Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664), Lu Shanji 鹿善繼 (1575–1636), Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558–1639), and others would be heavily involved in his publishing endeavors, including *Wu bei zhi*. Both Mao’s writings and the extant writings by his friend group attest to the fact that they were all heavily involved in Nanjing

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35 Throughout this dissertation, “chapter” refers to the Chinese “juan” 卷, and “volume” to the Chinese “ce” 冊. The inscription reads: “Written by Zhang Bi of Moling [i.e. Nanjing], and carved by Gao Liang” 秣陵章弼寫高梁刻. Unless otherwise stated, the edition of *Wu bei zhi* referred to here is Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Wu bei zhi* 武備志, originally printed 1621, in *XXSK*, volumes 963–966.

36 Zhao Hongjuan 趙紅娟, “Wan Ming Jiangnan wangzu de biankan huodong yu wan Ming dushi,” 146–147.
poetry circles and in the Nanjing courtesan scene. Some, but not all, were also intensive students of military studies. Even those that were not (Li Weizhen and Chen Jiru, for example), helped with *Wu bei zhi* and Mao’s preface, occasionally adding prefaces themselves. Some of them, Song and Lu in particular, would join Sun Chengzong’s group of advisers with Mao Yuanyi in 1623. Most of Mao Yuanyi’s closest friends and the powerful men, like Sun, who sponsored Mao Yuanyi in the 1620s were affiliates of the Donglin faction. Mao’s political fortunes would rise and fall with this faction and his own successes and failures in military service.

It is notable that Mao’s activities in the commercialized urban culture of Nanjing were concomitant with his production of an encyclopedic military text and involvement as a literati adviser to a civil bureaucrat in a military position. Kai Filipiak has argued that this sort of involvement in military affairs, whether officially or publishing military handbooks, was typical of an increasingly “militarized” civil bureaucracy, which improved military efficiency in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁷ Wang Hung-tai has likewise argued that interest in concrete studies, especially martial arts and military studies, was integral to many literati social circles in Nanjing in this period of crisis.³⁸ Charting the history of the first physical printing of *Wu bei zhi* is not possible, but the communications surrounding its production and circulation as a tool for social advancement clearly situate it in the circumstances described by Filipiak and Wang. *Wu bei zhi* would follow Mao Yuanyi in death as his crowning achievement, and would be reprinted throughout the Qing dynasty. The afterlife of this text and its compiler will be the subject of Chapter 6, where shifts in both the text’s material shape and how readers perceived it

provide ample space for considering the coherence of a Ming text across time. First, however, it would be fruitful to return to the literatures that help us think of *Wu bei zhi* as an object situated in the seventeenth century practices that shaped its composition, circulation, and reading in Nanjing and beyond.

### 1.4 The Literature: Statecraft, Encyclopedism, and Reader-Response

The literatures that allow a study of *Wu bei zhi* as an artifact shaped by the practices of late-Ming encyclopedism include studies of statecraft and concrete studies, especially those influenced by the history of science and technology studies, and studies of encyclopedism and scholarly praxis. Studies of late-Ming statecraft aim to dissect the relationship between textual knowledge and embodied knowledge of techniques and technologies, drawing on literatures of science and technology studies in early modern Europe. Chinese sources do not generally record practices of empirical observation as European sources do, which makes such analysis difficult. Such scholarship often limits itself to analysis of an author’s stated or implied beliefs about the relationship between knowledge and practice rather than records of actual praxis. Physical practices of knowledge making cannot be observed, and were not often described. Textual practices, however, leave physical traces in books. Literature on encyclopedism in both China and Europe provides methods for analyzing epistemic practices that might otherwise remain hidden in technical compendia like *Wu bei zhi*. Further literature on material culture in late-imperial China provides methods for thinking of both *Wu bei zhi* and its compiler as individual, multiple objects made of these practices. Emphasis on the material traces of these practices are

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practices in printed copies of *Wu bei zhi* keeps the dissertation grounded in praxis where analyses of encyclopedic statecraft texts have otherwise drifted.

1.4.1 **Statecraft and Concrete Studies**

Above, *Wu bei zhi* was described as part of an increased interest in “concrete studies” and “statecraft” in the late Ming period, where the former refers to both the kind of knowledge pursued and the epistemological commitments involved, and the latter refers to the study of topics, including moral philosophy, that allowed officials to efficiently govern the empire.40 These definitions are drawn from English scholarship, primarily from historians of Chinese science, but research on “concrete studies” is even more widespread among intellectual historians in China.41 Energetic debate among such scholars from the 1980s to the present has attempted to define “concrete studies” and “statecraft.” Most scholars start from the 1989 hallmark works, *Ming Qing shixue sichao shi* 明清實學思潮史 (A history of the concrete studies trend in the Ming and Qing) and Ge Rongjin’s 葛榮晉 *Zhongguo shixue sixiang shi* 中國實學思想史 (An intellectual history of Chinese concrete studies) to eke out definitions.42 Wang Shunxiang 王舜祥 summarizes Ge Rongjin’s definition of *shixue* as follows:


41 There is an organization devoted to the study of “concrete studies” in China. See “Zhongguo shixue yanjiu hui jianjie” 中國實學研究會簡介 [Brief introduction to the Chinese Association for the Study of Concrete Studies], *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中國社會科學 [China Social Science], posted 26 May 2014, http://arch.cssn.cn/st/st_xhzc/st_shxjclll/201405/t20140526_1185617.shtml (accessed 20 April 2019).

42 Chen Guying 陈鼓应, Xin Guanjie 辛冠洁, and Ge Rongjin 葛榮晉, *Ming Qing shixue sichao shi*. 


Shixues' basic intent is to study the “maximization of the utility of substantive things" (shiti da yong 實體達用), which is also the object of shixue research. Shixue scholars gradually shaped this [field] from the Song dynasty onward in opposition to Buddhist and Daoist discussions of "empty studies" (xuxue 虚學). The starting point of "Chinese concrete studies" is set in the Northern Song, and its end point is set in the era of the late-Qing Self-Strengthening Movement. Shixue was an intellectual trend that "valued the concrete and rejected the empty" (chong shi chu xu 崇實黜虛) across this period.

We might further elaborate on Wang’s summary using some of the phrases Ming and Qing writers used to describe “concrete studies,” and which scholars often mention to define it. Most secondary scholars refer to the concepts of “shiti da yong” and “chong shi chu xu” in this capacity. Other common descriptors of “concrete studies” include “managing the world and maximizing utility” (jingshi zhiyong 經世致用), and “concrete measures and concrete studies” (shice shixue 實測實學).

Although Ge Rongjin’s basic definition is almost universally cited in current research on concrete studies, scholars agree that this definition suffers from a few problems, namely: (1) Its definition is so general it could fit many different kinds of philosophy across dynastic China, depending on what is considered “concrete” (the substance of the universe? The human mind?

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43 Wang Shunxiang 王舜祥, “Ming Qing ‘shixue’ bian—ping Ge Rongjin jiaoshou ‘shixue’ lun,” 43.
Human action?). And (2), its definition relegating “concrete studies” to an intellectual trend that began in the Northern Song and peaked in the late Ming and early Qing is erroneous without further qualifying what, exactly, about Ming and Qing “concrete studies” differs from that of previous ages.\(^\text{45}\) Because political and moral philosophy in China were long concerned with the “management of the world” (a more literal rendering of “jingshi” or “statecraft”), and often contrasted the importance of the “real” or “concrete” (shi 實, sometimes, “practical”) with the “empty” (xu 虛), scholarship in both Chinese and English on this intellectual trend struggles to identify what exactly about late-Ming and early-Qing studies of “concrete” topics and statecraft was unique to the period. Wang Shunxiang, has cautioned that thinking of “concrete studies” as equivalent to the subjects that fit into the category of “statecraft” studies (military studies, agriculture, calendrics, etc.), leads to the neglect of actors’ categories and to teleological conclusions about the development of early modern science.\(^\text{46}\) This criticism applies most aptly to Chinese scholarship of the 1990s, but is relevant to English scholarship too. Scholarship in English attempts to avoid the problem of neglect of actors’ categories by connecting Ming and Qing concrete studies to an epistemic transition. Such scholarship links the phenomena of “seeking the truth through concrete phenomena” (shishi qiu shi 實事求是), “investigating things” (gewu 格物), and “broadly knowing things” (bowu 博物) with the incremental rise of “evidential research” (kaoju 考據).\(^\text{47}\) Joanna Handlin, in particular, has argued that in the late

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\(^{45}\) These objections are articulated in Liu Xuezhi 劉學智, “Guanyu shixue yanjiu de fa ngfa’lun sanyi,” 60–67. See also Wang Shunxiang, “Ming Qing ‘shixue’ bian.”

\(^{46}\) Wang Shunxiang, “Ming Qing ‘shixue’ bian,” 43–44.

\(^{47}\) See Elman, *On Their Own Terms*; and Elman, “The Investigation of Things (gewu 格物),” in Vogel and Dux, *Concepts of Nature*, 368–399. Yung Sik Kim has examined the relationship between “Confucian” and “specialist
sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, “many scholars during that time turned from metaphysics to ‘practical’ or ‘solid learning,’” and “personal experience supplemented, if not superseded, received opinions as a source of authority for knowledge,” which led to the questioning of canonical texts and the rise of “evidential studies.” I do not disagree that personal experience became an important marker of the validity of knowledge. However, given that evidential research did not reach the height of its epistemic authority until at least the eighteenth century, and evidential scholars were highly critical of late-Ming scholarly praxis, further consideration is due the shape of concrete studies and statecraft in the late Ming.

Most scholars do agree that the late-Ming and early-Qing constitute a distinct period in the study of methods of “practical” state management and “concrete” topics outside the realm of philosophy that, today, we might lump under categories of “natural studies” or science and knowledge” in imperial China, but has framed that query as a comparison with “the West” as a homogeneous whole. Kim argues that interest in “specialist knowledge” was secondary. I argue that “specialist knowledge” was made, in its own way, fundamental to the aims of literati by incorporating it into known epistemic frames, as Benjamin Elman argues regarding bowu 博物 in this period. Kim, “Confucian Scholars and Specialized Scientific and Technical Knowledge in Traditional China, 1000–1700, A Preliminary Overview,” 207–228; Elman, “Collecting and Classifying,” 140. Elman translates shixue in a number of ways depending on context: as “practical learning” (43, 217, 450), “concrete affairs” (534), and “solid learning” (546), in A Cultural History of Civil Examinations. The lack of consistent translation should not be seen as a fault. The phrase could be construed as all of these things depending on the context.

48 Handlin, Action in Late Ming Thought, 4. Handlin connects the rise in studies of statecraft and the production of manuals, including military manuals, to the increasing conviction of literati like Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536–1618) that competent, moral governance was best ensured by the strict and clear division of tasks and distribution of information. See pages 115–116, 140–142, and 159–160.

49 See He, Home and the World, 1–16.
technology. Those interested in questions of how technology and techniques were understood in the late Ming narrow their focus from concrete studies to “statecraft.” This is, in part, due to the more readily identifiable genre of “statecraft,” a term that actors consistently use in the titles of their works, like the voluminous Huang Ming jingshi wenbian 皇明經世文編 (Collected statecraft writings of the Glorious Ming, 1638). Wolfgang Franke identifies the collection of writings on “state affairs,” for example, memorials and official documents, as a “genuine innovation” of the sixteenth century. Scholars interested in the bureaucratic elites and science of the early seventeenth century have identified statecraft and concrete studies as topics of increasing interest to some officials. It was this already extant interest, they argue, that led to the warm reception Jesuit priests received in the late Ming. Notably, shared interests in the collection and organization of information, technical and otherwise, are characteristics shared across any number of early modern societies, and it is no longer surprising that compendium-producing, Chinese literati might have found common ground with Jesuits also seeking to collect information.

References:
50 Jami, Engelfriet, and Blue, eds., Statecraft & Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China; Bray, Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, and Métailié, eds. Graphics and Text.
51 Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608-1647), Huang Ming jingshi wenbian 皇明經世文編 [Edited writings on statecraft of the glorious Ming], in SKJH, ji bu, Volumes 22-29. Timothy Brook identifies “statecraft writing” as a large umbrella under which several sub-genres like “agricultural handbooks” reside. See Brook, “Xu Guangqi in his Context: The World of the Shanghai Gentry,” 72–98. Others in the volume adopt this term. See Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the Nongzheng quanshu?” 324. The earliest use of “statecraft” as a “rough label” for “writing about administrative matters” that I have come across is in Handlin, Action in Late Ming Thought, xi.
52 Franke, "Historical Writing During the Ming." 766–68.
53 Schäfer, The Crafting of the 10,000 Things, 129.
55 On information overload, collection, and classification, see below.
Although scholarship in English on statecraft and concrete studies often arrives there via interest in the history of science and technology, not all information associated with “statecraft” can necessarily be subsumed under the categories of techniques and technologies, and not all techniques and technologies can be subsumed under “statecraft.” Working definitions of “technique,” “technology,” and “technical” help delineate what was distinctive about “statecraft” knowledge in *Wu bei zhi*. Pamela Long and Robert Post define technology as “the sum of the methods by which a social group provides themselves with the material objects of their civilization.” This, Long and Post distinguish from a “technique,” a process by which one does something, not necessarily involving material technologies. Eric Ash argues that expertise in early modern Europe involved both “technical knowledge,” or “the knowledge of how to do something” (i.e. a technique), and “theoretical knowledge,” which was “knowledge of how and why something worked.” In early modern China, statecraft compendia like *Wu bei zhi* contained information on technologies and techniques, history and philosophy. History, philosophy, the technical, and the technological mutually substantiated each other in statecraft compendia, and cannot be studied in isolation. For this reason, I refer to books like *Wu bei zhi* as “technical” compendia, as their end purpose was the application of “knowledge of how to do something.”

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56 Long and Post, “Series Introduction,” in *Bray, Technology and Society in Ming China (1368–1644)*, viii. We might also distinguish between Bernard Stiegler’s “technics,” material things that inscribe and manifest human subjectivity, and techné. Jonathan Sterne defines techné, in the Aristotelian sense, referring to “techniques” or “embodied knowledge,” or “the process of producing things in the world…and the capacity or knowledge of contingency,” which he argues should not to be confused with abstract knowledge. See Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epithemeus*; Sterne, “Communication as Techné,” 91–92.

Scholars interested in how late-Ming people understood techniques and technologies must also study how this information was aggregated with “non-technical” information. Scholarship in the history of science has paid careful attention to both statecraft writings and other kinds of technical, encyclopedic compendia that served the purpose of information collection and organization in Ming China. Late-Ming technical compendiums have been objects of study for a number of scholars interested in concrete studies, statecraft, epistemological change, and the question of how craft knowledge was transmitted in late imperial China. In particular, Dagmar Schäfer’s monograph on Song Yingxing’s 宋應星 (1587–1666?) Tiangong kaiwu 天工開物 (The works of Heaven and the inception of things, 1637) examines literati’s relationship with craft and manufacture in the late Ming. Schäfer’s analysis is largely of Song’s stated beliefs on the epistemic and ontological status of crafts and the work of artisans and literati’s roles therein. It is less concerned with how Song goes about presenting the information and how it was received.

Other scholars have approached the epistemes of the late Ming via epistemic practices, especially citation and illustration practices in technical compendia. Carla Nappi’s work with Li Shizhen’s 李時珍 (1518–1593) Bencao gangmu (Systematic materia medica 本草綱目) examines the diversity of epistemic practices used in the sixteenth century to distinguish “between the believable and the absurd,” especially his “invocation of evidence” and organization of information. Martina Siebert has examined the practice of citation in wuyuan 物原 (origins of things) encyclopedias that historicize technologies and “validate” their

58 Schäfer, The Crafting of the 10,000 Things.
59 Nappi, The Monkey and the Inkpot, 6, 10.
development. Francesca Bray has argued that books like *Wu bei zhi*, specifically, Xu Guangqi’s 徐光啟 (1562–1633) *Nongzheng quanshu* 農政全書 (Complete book on agricultural administration, 1639), should be considered part of a “culture of knowledge” containing “clusters of expertise,” and were “prescriptive documents intended by their authors as technical manuals,” that “encode technological information.” Likewise Bray and Georges Métaliié have examined the rhetorical function of large treatises of *Nongzheng quanshu* as a performance of a state monopoly on agricultural knowledge. Bray and others analyze how illustrations function in technical texts. These questions closely approach those that I ask of *Wu bei zhi*, but with the exception of Nappi’s work, these works ultimately ask what the relationship was between this technical knowledge, encoded in texts, and the embodied knowledge of practitioners, like farmers. These are productive approaches, but do not cover all of the practices of meaning production observable in technological, encyclopedic texts and in the behavior of their compilers or authors. Namely, in the details of exactly which texts are cited in a compilation like *Wu bei zhi*, how they are cited, how the excerpts are ordered, punctuated, and commented on, we can observe processes of meaning construction and the performance of expertise.

63 Bray and Métaliié, “Who was the author of the Nongzheng quanshu,” 302.
1.4.2 Encyclopedism and Information Collection

Other practices of information compilation, circulation, meaning production, and reader reception unique to the late Ming might shed further light on epistemological assumptions of contemporaries interested in technology, techniques, and expertise. In order to observe all such practices in *Wu bei zhi*, I draw on studies of encyclopedism, information management, and the history of science in early modern Europe and China. Such studies are rooted in what Peter Burke calls “the second wave of the sociology of knowledge.” Where Burke’s “first wave” is rooted in the sociology of the first half of the twentieth century, and investigates the “acquisition and transmission of knowledge,” the second, postmodern wave differs in its emphasis on the “construction” or “manufacture” of knowledge, and on the practices that make up these processes. Burke identifies encyclopedias as one of three sources that allow a three-pronged investigation of the classification of knowledge in early-modern Europe. The question of how knowledge was classified rises from a broader question of what early modern knowledge systems looked like, and how actors dealt with information overload.

Studies of encyclopedic and information practices are fundamentally oriented toward answering this latter question. Early modern societies had a wealth of systems for collecting and classifying information and things which have been the subject of considerable study.

64 Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*, 8. Burke describes the second wave as heavily dependent on the vocabulary of Michel Foucault, and insights from outside the field of sociology, especially Foucault, Thomas Kuhn, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. See Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*, 6.

65 The other sources being library cataloging systems and school curricula. Ibid., 90. For brief reflections on the comparative history of early modern encyclopedias, see Burke, “Reflections on the History of Encyclopedias,” 193–206.


67 See the work of Blair and Yeo, cited above in footnote 24.
Richard Yeo, for example, argues that “scientific dictionaries” and their encyclopedic successors were a last hurrah of early-modern scholars’ attempt to live up to the idea of possessing knowledge as “an ordered whole.”68 During the Enlightenment, Yeo argues, encyclopedic works strove to “manage” or “collect and codify knowledge,” and “exemplified the Enlightenment ideal of knowledge as open, collaborative and public.”69 Ann Blair’s Too Much to Know examines early-modern strategies of “information management,” including the compilation of encyclopedias, and argues that readers developed practices of “information management” in response to a perceived change in the quantity of available information long before the term was used in Western languages.70 Blair uses “reference books” to denote such books—not an actors’ category, but one that describes their function, which she describes as “the collection and arrangement of textual excerpts designed for consultation.”71 Blair distinguishes between “knowledge” and “information,” the latter referring to what Yeo describes as “public knowledge.” I’ll follow Blair’s distinction between the two, as it best describes the content found in Wu bei zhi. Blair writes:

I use the term “information” in a nontechnical way, as distinct from data (which requires further processing before it can be meaningful) and from knowledge (which implies an individual knower). We speak of storing, retrieving, selecting, and organizing information, with the implication that it can be stored and shared for use and reuse in different ways by many people—a kind of public property distinct from personal knowledge. Furthermore, information typically takes the form of discrete and small-sized items that have been removed from their original contexts and made available as “morsels” ready to be rearticulated.72

68 Yeo, Encyclopaedic Visions, xiii.
69 Ibid., xiv, xvii.
70 Ibid., 1–3.
71 Blair, Too Much to Know, 1. Alternatively, Mary Elizabeth Berry proposes “information texts,” Berry, Japan in Print, 51.
72 Blair, Too Much to Know, 2.
This description of information describes precisely the kind of textual excerpts compiled in *Wu bei zhi* and will be used in this dissertation to describe what is included in *Wu bei zhi*, as opposed to what is possessed by the compiler (knowledge). This distinction between knowledge and information is widely applied in scholarship on the history of the book. Mary Elizabeth Berry, for example, proposes the concept of a “library of public information” for Edo Japan (1603–1868), which she describes as a repository of information that was known or available to a reading public and that created an idea of a community to which the reader belongs (in this case, “a Japan”). Whether in Europe or Japan, it is argued that practices of information management, and books like encyclopedias that materialized those efforts, were distinct hallmarks of early modern concerns about the uncontrolled proliferation of printed information.

Writing about encyclopedism and collecting in China requires grappling with what counts as an encyclopedia or encyclopedic text, perhaps even more so than Europe where the name originates. Often, genres that collect and systematize information are all, confusingly, translated as “encyclopedia,” even though authors acknowledge that the word is hardly a precise fit. The modern Chinese word for “encyclopedia” is *baike quanshu* 百科全書, which more or less maps well onto the modern style of encyclopedias written in English. Scholarship on pre-modern encyclopedic texts in China most often uses the word “encyclopedia” to translate “*leishu*” 類書, literally, “category books.” This genre is named for its format, rather than its content. Hilde De Weerdt traces their appearance as a bibliographical category in the eleventh century, and

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73 Berry, *Japan in Print*, 16–18.  
describes how, from the very beginning, the genre itself was incredibly heterogeneous in content, ranging from basic, educational primers to specialized tomes on technical topics like military affairs, to *leishu* cataloging historical information, or even *leishu* devoted to specific titles.\(^7^6\) De Weerdt describes the two basic forms of information organization: “The organizational principles for encyclopedias fell into two broad categories: the entries were arranged either according to a thematic logic, or on the basis of rhyme.”\(^7^7\) Most, but not all, of the material in *leishu* was quoted from other sources in chronological order. Generally, *leishu* are recognized as works reorganizing information into a shape appropriate for readers to more efficiently learn about whatever they contained—textbooks, as De Weerdt dubs them.\(^7^8\) This held true through the late Ming, when literati used them for studying for the civil examinations, and as a reference for official duties.\(^7^9\) De Weerdt also distinguishes between officially published and private encyclopedias, a distinction that remains relevant in the Ming.

In addition, not all books that are organized like a *leishu* are categorized under that rubric in bibliographies. Late-Ming statecraft texts like *Wu bei zhi*, and *Nongzheng quanshu* (see above) were encyclopedic in scale, and often mimicked the organizational principles of *leishu*, but generally categorized according to a topical category (e.g. *Bingshu* 兵書, military books).\(^8^0\) Benjamin Elman has linked the uptick in encyclopedic-scale publications on technical topics to epistemic changes in the late Ming, especially “investigating things and extending knowledge”

\(^7^6\) De Weerdt “The Encyclopedia as Textbook,” 77.

\(^7^7\) Ibid.

\(^7^8\) Ibid., 77–102.

\(^7^9\) Elman, “Collecting and Classifying,” 131. Elman calls these *leishu* that aided orthodox education, “reference encyclopedias.”

\(^8^0\) Xie Wenchao, *Mingdai bingshu yanjiu*; Xu Baolin, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*. 
In the late Ming, a subgenre of leishu, “daily-use encyclopedias” (riyong leishu 日用類書), became increasingly popular. These covered a far broader range of topics, including “low-brow” topics like household advice, drinking games, and information on popular novels. Leishu and other encyclopedic texts have been widely recognized as representative of interest in the collection and classification of information and things in early modern China that was shared with other early modern societies. Specialized encyclopedias, in particular, “classified and systematized” various kinds of knowledge, taming the known and unknown.

Because of the diversity of genres translated as “encyclopedia,” in this dissertation, therefore, it is important to make the distinction between “encyclopedias,” the genre, and “encyclopedic,” the adjective that nods toward these characteristics so often found in early modern texts. I follow Elias Muhanna, in drawing on Jason König and Greg Woolf’s definition of encyclopedism. Rather than studying the genre of the encyclopedia, which implies a certain format not solidified until the eighteenth century, all three scholars study the practices of

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82 Elman, “Collecting and Classifying,” 131. On drinking games in such books, see He, Home and the World. A similar genre, almost closer to a periodical in nature, appear in the late-Qing and early Republican periods, and often included information on science for lay audiences. This genre was called Wanbao quanshu 晚報全書. See Judge, “Science for the Chinese Common Reader?,” 359–383.
83 Brigid Vance uses this language to describe the function of a dream encyclopedia. Vance, “Textualizing Dreams in a Late Ming Dream Encyclopedia,” i. He Yuming argues that Luochong lu 蠶蟲路 (Record of naked creatures) “domesticated the broader world.” See Home and the World, 14–15. Carla Nappi argues that Li Shizhen made sense of natural objects’ relevance to medical practice “using evidentiary practices from one literary realm to prove claims in another.” See The Monkey and the Inkpot, 7. Encyclopedias were not the only genres in which classification and selection were relevant. Timothy Clifford looks at editorial strategies in anthologies of collected prose in the late Ming. See Clifford, “In the Eye of the Selector.”
encyclopedism, “comprehensive and systematic knowledge-ordering.”

Though Muhanna and König and Woolf name their object of study the “motifs and ambitions and techniques” of encyclopedists, Muhanna, in particular, outlines practices of collecting and organizing knowledge. Like literati in seventeenth-century China, encyclopedists in Europe and the Mamluk empire (Muhanna’s object of study) were confronted with the problem of an over-abundance of information, and forced to choose how to articulate what of that information was reliable. Until recently, studies tracing the social and information organization practices of such texts were few and far between, and should be situated in a broader concern for social and reading praxis in late Imperial China.

1.4.3 Reading Communities and their Social and Reading Practices

One strategy for the study of social practices in the production of technical knowledge is the writing of micro-histories of social practices in the making of encyclopedic texts. Scholars of the European history of science have paid much attention to the social nature of knowledge and text production in the history of science and technology. Social histories of Renaissance science have described how establishing truth by experiment or book relied on testimony from socially competent, reliable witnesses. Eric Ash has identified early modern Europe as the site of an emerging understanding of expertise: “To be “expert” was to possess and control a body of

86 Much of this literature relies on precedents set by Bruno Latour. See Latour, Science in Action.
specialized practical or productive knowledge, not readily available to everyone….or at least get things of value done by directing the work of others.” We’ll see that self-fashioned “experts” in China also walked this line between theoretical, usually text-based knowledge, and firsthand “technical” knowledge.

The social practices of early modern European “experts” and specialists as they both shaped their identities and produced texts have come under scrutiny. Historians of natural history in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment have traced social practices that established moral and intellectual authority within networks of scientists, and in his study of Galileo, Mario Biagioli outlined the daily practices of a scientist in his efforts to “self-fashion” a professional identity and thereby survive dangerous circumstances using patronage networks. The study of social practices is useful for the study of a text like Wu bei zhi whose compiler wrote so prolifically to collaborators and friends and promoted himself as a specialist or “expert” consultant and adviser.

However, few scholars of the history of science and technology in China have drawn inspiration from studies in the history of science in Europe to write microhistories of the social practices involved in the production of expertise or its textual products. One exception is Chu

90 Biagioli, Galileo, Courtier.
Ping-yi, who has studied the social practices of the creators of the *Chongzhen lishu* (Calendrical treatises of the Chongzhen era). Chu draws on theories of the archive and Lorraine Daston’s work on “scientific objects” to imagine *Chongzhen lishu* as a constructed, encyclopedic archive, and a center of struggles for power over technical expertise in the seventeenth century.91 Few historians of the book in China have constructed microhistories of the social production of texts. They have instead considered how to define a broader public who might be executing social or reading practices and interacting with material books of many genres.

Identifying the social and reading practices relevant to the collection and organization of information into encyclopedic books demands a definition of who exactly was executing those practices—the reading public. Definitions of “public” vary across studies of encyclopedism in Europe, China, and beyond. In literature on China, Jiangnan is generally considered a center of literati activity, sometimes even a burgeoning “public sphere” or “mass communications society” in the Habermassian sense.92 Chow Kai-wing, for example, articulates the emergence of a reading public with the growth of a literate merchant class and contrasts this with the authority of the state over censorship.93 Joseph McDermott prefers to use the framework of a “community of learning” or “community of letters” to describe “a large group of educated persons collectively engaged in the study and development of a body of shared humanist learning outside the parameters of authorized knowledge of the state or a religious organization,” a better fit than the

92 For a summary of the evolution of this literature, see Meyer-Fong, “The Printed World: Books, Publishing Culture, and Society in Late Imperial China,” 787–817.
European “republic of letters” or other models that presume the presence of institutions that allowed wide access to books.94

Others look to “collective identity” to define a reading public. Mary Elizabeth Berry’s “library of information” (above), for example, shapes the “collective identity” of the nation Edo Japan. The “library” and its texts rely on “a core of standard information” and “master conventions.” Her “library of public information” depended on the production of texts which were (1) “accessible to any anonymous buyer with means” and (2) “produced for an imagined audience…that constituted a permeable reading community bound by both common interests and common frames of reference.”95 In this library of common knowledge, “worldly phenomena” can be known via observation, and its texts “presume the coherence of those phenomena through holistic and taxonomic modes of analysis.”96 Berry’s understanding of collective identity resonates with Michael Warner’s definition of a “public” as an audience that “is constituted through mere attention,” and is “the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse,” and can be created via “the concatenation of texts through time.”97 Berry’s “master conventions” might also be described as practices common to a “community of readers” who also share “common frames of reference,” “a core standard of information,” and a corpus of texts

95 Berry, Japan in Print, 22.
96 Berry, Japan in Print, 16–18.
97 Warner, Publics and Counter Publics, 87, 90, 96. Both Warner and Berry’s conceptualizations of “publics” imply a teleological drift towards the modern public of either a nation-state or a public accustomed to the rapid circulation of modern media and “rational discussion writ large.” Scholars of the history of the book in China have fruitfully mined theories of reader-response criticism to ameliorate the teleological problem of identifying a modern “public” audience for shared information. Note that Hilde de Weerdt detaches some of these same phenomena from the problem of “nation,” arguing that the Song dynasty empire sees communication networks unifying it into an institutional whole. See de Weerdt, Information Territory, and Networks, 2–6.
passed down across time. Reader-response criticism provides ways of observing the practices and shared textual corpora of “communities of readers.”

Roger Chartier argues that a community of readers shares “norms and conventions of reading that define, for each community of readers, legitimate uses of the book, ways to read, and the instruments and methods of interpretations.”98 Stanley Fish defines an interpretive community as a group who share learned strategies for reading.99 Jonathan Culler similarly argues that readers make meaning through “literary competence.”100 Culler writes, “To be an experienced reader of literature is, after all, to have gained a sense of what can be done with literary works and thus to have assimilated a system which is largely interpersonal.”101 To be a member of an interpretive community, one must abide by conventions of reading and meaning production shared in that community. These conventions “impose severe limitations on the set of acceptable or plausible readings.”102 Thus, to identify a set of conventions, strategies, norms, or practices of reading is to historicize a text.103

99 Key in Fish’s conceptualization of the act of reading is that it is actually an act of writing: readers are actually “constituting their [text’s] properties and assigning their [text’s] intentions.” To read is to create meaning, and the text does not exist without this act. Fish, “Interpreting the Variorum,” 357–358. Much reader response criticism is based on the work of Michel de Certeau. See de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, 169, 170–171, as cited in Dai, “Books, Reading, and Knowledge in Ming China,” 20.
100 Culler, Structuralist Poetics,” 113–130.
101 Ibid., 128.
102 Ibid., 127.
103 Aside from Blair and Yeo, mentioned above, others have also considered reading practices in the history of early modern European science. See Smith and Schmidt, eds., Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe, chapters 5–9.
Scholars of the history of the book in China have identified a number of reading practices specific to Ming literate communities. Relying on officials’ anecdotes regarding their reading experiences, Joseph Dennis’s study of gazetteers as a genre argues that those in official service read these texts for information on areas where they have been assigned to serve. Others used gazetteers as references for military geography, others as avenues of transmitting policy ideas to future officials. Local elites further used them to advocate for their communities.¹⁰⁴ Compiling the anecdotes of real readers is one way of avoiding basing conclusions about reading practices on imagined readers alone. Depending on the genre, such anecdotes are few and far between. Other scholars look to rules that govern interpretive communities. Dai Lianbin, for example, seeks to outline the rules by which readers learned to read in late-imperial China, and thus the rules by which they create meaning as individuals and as communities, arguing that Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130–1200) theory of reading remained the norm for training readers through the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ Dai focuses on reading the Confucian classics in preparation for the examination systems to the neglect of other genres widely distributed in the late Ming.

Other authors have prioritized the reader’s encounter with the material form of woodblock-printed texts in late imperial China. Anne Burkus-Chasson examines Liu Yuan’s 劉源 Lingyan ge 凌煙閣 (Lingyan gallery), asking how readers approached the text, and how the images were incorporated in the text as part of the reading process. Likewise, Robert Hegel seeks

¹⁰⁵ Dai Lianbin gives a succinct analysis of the difficulty historians face in distinguishing between the implied reader and the historical reader. He argues that using “paratexts” as defined by Gérard Genette is not as reliable as examining the rules of reading that readers acknowledged following. Dai, "Books, Reading, and Knowledge in Ming China," 7–8, 30–31. “Paratexts” are those parts of a book outside the text proper made with an imagined reader in mind. See Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. 

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to understand “how fiction signified in Ming and Qing China” and not “what it signified,” and assumes that texts have “multiple readings.”

Others, like David Rolston, have examined the role of punctuation and commentary in readers’ experience of fiction. These works emphasize what authors might have intended readers to encounter. Work by Shang Wei and He Yuming asks not what the authors of miscellanies intended, but what readers would need to know in order to approach them. Shang Wei argues, for example, that literary miscellanies and daily-use encyclopedias influenced the shape and format of printed novels like *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅 (Plum in the golden vase) in the late Ming, and that the juxtaposition of diverse kinds of text on the page, plus the integration of image, text, and commentary in multiple, framed rows, led to “extensive” reading rather than “intensive,” and the adoption of reading strategies that could “cope with fragmented materials on the page.” He Yuming likewise examines the demands made of a reader by the format of printed drama miscellanies, novels, and compilations of information on foreign peoples. He argues that certain citation practices and reading practices were demanded by “the bibliographical terrain of Ming book culture.” Readers needed to “display” expert “textual command” to navigate these texts made with an “intentional process of reorganization and play.” The “copy and paste” strategies of late-Ming editors were lamented extensively in the mid-Qing as “sloppy,” but they were in fact integral to late-Ming reading

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107 Rolston, *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary*.

108 Shang, “*Jin Ping Mei* and Late Ming Print Culture,” 187–238, especially pp. 204–218; and Shang, “The Making of the Everyday World.”

109 He, *Home and the World*, 20, 52.
culture, and readers needed “a correspondingly complex constellation of interpretive skills.”

Harkening back to Culler’s “literary competence,” He describes this constellation of skills as “segmented reading” and “book conversancy,” which was more about “how to use the object” than literacy. While these are applied in a playful manner in the texts He examines, and for recreation in the novels Shang Wei examines, similar techniques are necessary for the interpretation of technical, encyclopedic texts like *Wu bei zhi*, which rely heavily on the combination of a variety of texts and images to create meaning.

He Yuming, Shang Wei, Anne Burkus-Chasson, Joseph Dennis, David Rolston, and others have successfully historicized certain textual practices of interpretive communities in the late Ming and the “library of information” or “bibliographical terrain of Ming book culture.” However, no one has yet successfully analyzed what “book conversancy” looked like for an encyclopedic statecraft text. Because statecraft texts are a genre that by definition disseminates “information” for the governance of the empire, the stakes of “conversancy” and epistemic authority are considerably higher for compilers and readers of this genre. While Chu Ping-yi fruitfully historicized the social production of truth in the *Chongzhen lishu*, this is not integrated with a study of textual epistemic praxis. In historicizing the “interpretive community” responsible for *Wu bei zhi* and *Wu bei zhi* itself as an object, analysis of all these items is necessary. One must examine not only the shared reading strategies and practices evident in the text, but also its core content and the social practices that went into its production and reception. A holistic examination of epistemic practices and literati claims of expert knowledge in the

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110 Ibid., 16.
111 Ibid., 248.
context of late-Ming statecraft demands examination of all the practices that go into the production and consumption of relevant texts.

This task poses a particular challenge because so many of the texts foundational to military expertise in the seventeenth century are still the first point of reference for modern scholars who choose to address “Chinese” military strategy. Their foundational status is often taken for granted, even when they are acknowledged as a constructed foundation from the Song dynasty (960–1279).\textsuperscript{112} To readers familiar with Chinese military history or strategic writings, much of the content in this dissertation will not appear new at first glance. The difficulty lies in distinguishing between our own assumptions about the material and those of a Ming reader or compiler. What would have been obvious to a Ming reader might also be obvious to modern readers, and it might not. By observing textual and social practices we might consider obvious, we reveal the epistemic assumptions of readers in this period. The framework of knowledge revealed in the *Wu bei zhi* must be approached through the mapping of editorial practices generally left unexamined precisely because they were (and are still) considered obvious.

This dissertation endeavors a holistic case study of a technical, encyclopedic statecraft text, one that examines all the relevant textual and social practices, even those we generally ignore, by combining the approaches of book historians like Dennis and He and historians of science and statecraft like Chu Ping-yi. To do so fruitfully requires fleshing out a methodological framework that embraces *Wu bei zhi* and its compiler as coherent but multiple objects.

\textsuperscript{112} Sawyer, translation and commentary, with Mei-chün Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, 1–2.
1.5 Methods: Objects, Praxis, and Technics

First and foremost, the idea to consider *Wu bei zhi* as a simultaneously multiple yet cohesive object comes from science and technology studies, specifically, understandings of how practices “enact” objects, both abstract and material. Literature studying the production and agency of objects is rooted in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), a materialist answer to the dichotomous division in the 1980s and 1990s between post-structuralism and realism. In ANT, both the human and non-human are integral actors in networks of knowledge production. ANT materialized in science and technology studies and the sociology and anthropology of knowledge, and has continued to be applied elsewhere, especially in the history of science.¹¹³

Arun Saldanha summarizes the influence of ANT on studies of the production of knowledge as follows: “In a way, it turned an epistemological question—how can we get to truth?—to an ontological one—how does knowledge come about?”¹¹⁴ The question “how does knowledge come about” inevitably orients the scholar toward the study of processes, and thus ANT is part of an interest in the study of practice—“the practice turn.” Theorists of “the practice turn” identify this larger trend as a result of “impulses to move these disciplines [including history, cultural

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¹¹³ Arun Saldanha provides an excellent summary of this process. See Saldanha, “Actor-Network Theory and Critical Sociology,” 419–421. The work of Bruno Latour, Michael Callon, John Law, and Annemarie Mol takes center stage in this narrative. Saldanha provides Shapin and Schaffer, cited above, as an example of the influence of ANT on the history of science. Another example from the history of science in early modern Europe is Klein and Spary, eds., *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe*. For a few clarifications from Latour, see “On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications,” 369–381. For a more representative look at the study of “scientific objects” and issues of ontology vs. epistemology, and realism vs. constructivism in ANT, see Daston, ed., *Biographies of Scientific Objects*.

theory, sociology, etc.] beyond current problematic dualisms and ways of thinking.”¹¹⁵ This includes “post-humanist” approaches like those in ANT which strive to dismantle rigid divisions between human and non-human actors.¹¹⁶ Between ANT and the broader concerns of the practice turn in cultural theory, this dissertation draws heavily on several propositions found therein: first, the importance of “epistemic objects,” and the potential for texts and books to be understood as epistemic objects;¹¹⁷ and second, the idea of practices “enacting” such objects in such a way that books, concepts, and ideas should be considered “multiple” objects that nonetheless cohere. Intellectual and social practices in the late Ming, thus, enact Wu bei zhi, Mao Yuanyi, and associated knowledge and expertise.

Scholars have argued over a definition and consistent term for “epistemic objects.” Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, who introduced the concept to the history of science, prefers “epistemic things” or “scientific objects,” which he understands as inherently unstable (in contrast with “technical things”) and brought into being by some “experimental system,” which “constitutes the scientific object.”¹¹⁸ Karin Knorr Cetina, following Rheinberger, defines these objects as “any scientific objects of investigation that are at the center of a research process and in the process of being materially defined” and are therefore “continually unready-to-hand, unavailable

¹¹⁶ Ibid.
¹¹⁷ On books as objects in early modern Europe and reading practices, see Smith and Schmidt, eds., Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe, chapters 5–9. Lisa Gitelman defines “documents” as “epistemic objects:” “they are recognizable sites and subjects of interpretation across the disciplines and beyond, evidential structures in the long human history of clues.” Gitelman, Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents, 1.
and problematic, and also as a possible stage in the career of any thing.” It is this “open-ended” quality of epistemic objects that, in the context of modern science, make them “a central source of innovation and reorientation in societal practices.” The concomitancy of the material and the abstract here is important, and readily visible in the work of Annemarie Mol, who dispenses with the word “epistemic” and simply refers to “objects,” which are simultaneously abstract and concrete things that come into being through practices. This dynamic is useful for considering the difference between a “text” (abstract and immaterial) and a “book” (a material object).

This dissertation draws its framework from Mol’s *The Body Multiple* (see page 2). Mol seeks to study the “knowledge practices” that build an ontology (as opposed to an epistemology) of a disease. She argues that knowledge practices are multiple, and not equivalent, and therefore diseases are “multiple” objects that nonetheless “hang together.” Mol avoids the term “cohere,” preferring to discuss how objects are “assembled” through “modes of coordination,” as this does not imply a shared, coherent logic or understanding. For Mol, a disease is both a physical process and conceptual understanding—simultaneously abstract and concrete, and it only loosely coheres—no two actors will engage in identical practices to bring it into being, and therefore no watertight, singular understanding of a disease should be sought. Likewise, the text/book


120 Miettinen and Virkkunen, “Epistemic Objects, Artefacts, and Organizational Change,” 438. Boris Ewenstein and Jennifer Whyte argue that we might think of “epistemic objects” as capable of being both “boundary objects” and “epistemic.” The former are “concrete” but differently interpreted by various actors. The latter are abstract, and deployed differently by different expert subjects. See Ewenstein and Whyte, “Knowledge Practices in Design: The Role of Visual Representations as ‘Epistemic Objects,’” 8–10.

dichotomy is one between abstract (a title referring to the same compilation of words) and material (books bearing that title), and as readers deviate from the intention of the author and create their own text, and as publishers print different texts, the text and book become multiple. Whether the material or abstract object, these are constructed (or in Mol’s words, “enacted”) by the practices of the compiler and his readers, whether those are the acts of a compiler, punctuator, and commentator, the social practices of a literatus pursuing employment, or the practices of later readers and publishers.\footnote{122}{See Mol, \textit{The Body Multiple}, “preface,” and pages 1–5, 30–31, 55.} Thus, we might think of the book as both an “epistemic object,” which I will use throughout to refer to the notion of \textit{Wu bei zhi} as a text or abstract object, and also as a multiple, material object: a book.\footnote{123}{Because books are material containers of text, it is also useful to borrow from Bernard Stiegler to conceptualize what exactly it is books do as non-human actors. As discussed above, Stiegler’s work grapples with how human subjectivity is “materialized” in technical systems of all kinds, which he refers to as “technics.” Kristina Lebedeva succinctly summarizes part of Bernard Stiegler’s thesis in his \textit{Technics in Time} as follows: “human beings inhabit the world by externalized memory, by the memory converted into matter” (technics, see Lebedeva page 82). Texts, too, are examples of “organized inorganic” entities that perform this work (see Stiegler, page 243). Lebedeva writes more specifically regarding Stiegler’s discussion of the externalization of memory into text, “If one were to ask, “What does the orthographic \textit{do}?”, the answer would be that it enables one’s certainty about the past, which means that it secures one’s connection to that very past” (again, see Lebedeva page 82). In essence, technics, and in this dissertation, books, “mediate” human experience and subjectivity (see Hansen, “abstract,” page 44). While Stiegler is not contemplated at length in this dissertation, shadows exist behind more explicit methodologies. Throughout, \textit{Wu bei zhi} is not a static container of information, but a “technic” or “object” materialized through the human practices of compilation, editing, reading, and circulation that thereby mediates subjects’ understanding of the entirety of “military affairs” and momentous events of the late Ming. See Lebedeva, “Review Article: Bernard Stiegler, \textit{Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation}, Stanford University Press, 2008,” 81–85; Stiegler, \textit{Technics and Time 1}; Hansen,” Technics Beyond the Temporal Object,” 44–62.} 

Likewise, we’ll find that the author or compiler, in this case, Mao Yuanyi, is inseparable from the texts to which his name is attached. In response to critical theory that proclaims “the
death of the author,”124 and as part of a resurrection of the concept of an “author” in terms not bound to European modernity, Raji C. Steineck and Christian Schwermann have developed a working theory of authorship specifically targeting pre-modern Asia. Fundamental to Steineck and Schwermann’s conceptualization of the author is that compilation and collation are acts of creative authorship, and these acts can create guidelines by which a reader interprets a text.125 The author, essentially, guides the reader by performing the habits of his interpretive community. Steineck and Schwermann likewise maintain that the author is a historically embedded individual. Their “operational model” of authorship involves multiple historically specific “productive functions” of authors, including compilation. They begin with a trifold division of the “author function” into the “origination,” “responsibility,”126 and “interpretation,” which can be further subdivided into many other functions. They describe the author as “an author constellation,” and argue that the author’s subjectivity can be pursued in “explicit markers and oblique marks” in the text—self reference and marks made by the author.127 To put this in the language of objects and praxis à la Mol, these tools will be drawn on here to identify practices of Mao Yuanyi as compiler, and whose name is one mode of coordination that causes the text of Wu bei zhi to hang together.

We will also find that Mao Yuanyi’s multiple practices as author/compiler enact his own composite identity. As we saw in the work of Mario Biagioli, Mao Yuanyi’s social practices enact

125 See also, Long, Openness, Secrecy, and Authorship, 4.
126 This function, they argue, most closely resembles the emphasis of Michel Foucault’s “author function.” Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 281–291. See Steineck and Schwermann, “Introduction,” in Steineck and Schwermann, eds., That Wonderful Composite Called Author, 6.
historically specific identities that allow him to operate in multiple social spaces. In analyzing gift exchange practices in Ming China, Craig Clunas borrowed the concept of the “dividual person” from Marilyn Strathern, who is, to quote Strathern, “constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produced them,” or a “social microcosm.”128 As I examine *Wu bei zhi* in this dissertation, I will also examine Mao Yuanyi as multiple or “dividual” object enacted by his own practices. Because technics, objects, and individuals are historically embedded, by understanding *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi as objects, our focus is diverted to the scholarly and social practices specific to late-Ming statecraft studies. Studying these practices allows us to understand the epistemic assumptions that undergird claims of technical expertise and truth in this period.

1.6 Research Questions and the Text: Why *Wu bei zhi*?

*Wu bei zhi* serves as an ideal case study for the examination of the compilation, social, and punctuation practices that went into the production of a statecraft text and the epistemic assumptions underlying those practices. A number of characteristics of *Wu bei zhi* contribute to its utility. Firstly, it fulfills the definition above of an encyclopedic text. In addition to statements from its compiler and readers regarding its purpose of comprehensively collecting and systematizing all available textual military knowledge, its format and content support these statements. Secondly, its compiler and readers also make clear statements situating it in the context of late-Ming concerns for concrete studies and statecraft. Thirdly, the entire text is printed with punctuation and marginal commentary from Mao Yuanyi, which gives some insight

into Mao’s experience of reading the texts copied and pasted into *Wu bei zhi*, even if we assume this was only performed for his imagined readers. Fourthly, Mao Yuanyi’s surviving collected writings are prolific and remarkably complete. These provide ample opportunity to observe his social practices, including how he deployed poetry, memorials, personal accounts of military campaigns, and, most importantly, letters, to superiors and peers alike. Lastly, copies of *Wu bei zhi* from the late Ming and copies of reprints from the Qing dynasty survive in North America, Taiwan, Japan, and China, some of which contain marginalia and handwritten punctuation. The number of surviving copies allows intensive examination of the material objects readers would have interacted with. These characteristics of *Wu bei zhi* allow a holistic study of the text as an epistemic object, the book as material object, the author as dividual object, and their underpinning episteme. Like Ann Blair’s “reference books,” or Richard Yeo’s “scientific dictionaries,” the format of *Wu bei zhi* lends itself to understanding how specialized information should be organized, interpreted and read. I seek to connect practices of compilation, punctuation, and socialization with epistemic change in seventeenth century China: specifically, I ask if there are epistemic and social practices unique to the genres of concrete studies and statecraft in this period.

Fundamentally, this dissertation will use a single book and author as the basis for a case study of textual and social practices in seventeenth-century China. These practices enact the author and the book as epistemic and material objects. Both the author and the book are multiple/dividual. Ontologically, I’m asking what an author and a book are—and each chapter will have a slightly different answer to that question. However, a book exists across time. As soon as we ask what a book *is* across time—we see that it is a multiple thing. The answer to
“what was *Wu bei zhi* in the late Ming?” is quite different from “What has *Wu bei zhi* been at other times?” This means that I’m simultaneously asking two historical questions:

1. What practices were specific to the late Ming that built an object like *Wu bei zhi*? A technical encyclopedia? Is it separable from its author, Mao Yuanyi? What assumptions about knowledge, expertise, and truth underwrote these practices? How generalizable are these to a genre of “statecraft” encyclopedias?
2. The last chapter of this dissertation asks a slightly different question, which is, how does a material and epistemic object like *Wu bei zhi* exist and change across time? What is its relationship to its compiler?

Studying minute practices of encyclopedism in a single case study gives us insight into “truth practices” that might otherwise be unobserved in the late Ming—what did it mean to create and read a technical encyclopedia? What did that encyclopedia become after this moment of “truth practices” faded? The ontological questions I’ve asked are answered historically in this study. The historical specificity of the answers to “What is *Wu bei zhi*?” And “What is Mao Yuanyi?” make it clear that any ontological question about the nature of a book or author is meaningless without accounting for the problem of historical multiplicity and change. As we saw in the literature review above, for all that we have studies of encyclopedism, “statecraft,” and “concrete studies” in the late Ming, we do not have studies that focus on the minutia of scholarly praxis that underwrite the epistemic assumptions in their texts, nor do we have a sufficient understanding of how such texts and readers interacted over time. This study seeks to remedy this deficiency.
1.7 The Chapters

Chapters 2 through 4 of the dissertation each focus on a set of practices like those described above as they are enacted in *Wu bei zhi*. Each chapter asks, first, what practices specifically were unique to the study of statecraft or military studies in the late Ming? And, second, what does this tell us about the epistemic assumptions of the compilers and readers? Chapter 5 examines similar practices in other statecraft compendia from the same period and asks how common these practices were. Chapter 6 studies the afterlife of *Wu bei zhi* as it was reproduced throughout the Qing dynasty, and considers the implications of its multiple material manifestations in their historical contexts.

Chapter 2 begins by describing how the military and historical books cited in *Wu bei zhi* comprise a “library of public information” for aspiring military experts in the seventeenth century. This is achieved by analyzing citation practices in *Wu bei zhi* and therefore Mao Yuanyi’s performance of his own reading expertise and his expectations of imagined readers. What were the core texts, practices, and collective expectations of this library? This chapter uses the epistemic priorities made evident in these citation practices to argue that (1) new technical information was given meaning by situating it against chronologically organized background of older, familiar texts; (2) authority as a expert author worthy of citation in *Wu bei zhi* was verified through a historical record of military successes; and (3) text and image work together to demonstrate a commitment to excellence in both practice of and literate familiarity with military techniques and technologies on the part of the compiler of *Wu bei zhi*.

Chapter 3 examines Mao’s social relationships and practices and how they contributed to the formation of *Wu bei zhi* and to the shape of its compiler’s official career. The author and book are both dissected as abstract, social objects built by practices specific to late
Ming literati. Emphasis is placed on the practices observed in Mao’s prolific correspondence with men inside and outside the civil bureaucracy. Mao performs a model of expertise that involved the mastery of theoretical, textual knowledge of techniques and technologies, and the demonstrated potential ability to apply these in policy and practice.

Chapter 4 asks how printed punctuation and marginal commentary in *Wu bei zhi* contribute to both the stabilization and destabilization of meaning in a technical treatise, and argues that punctuation practices in *Wu bei zhi* reinforce the performed model of expertise observed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapters 2 through 4 each examine a specific set of practices in the production and circulation of *Wu bei zhi*, and ask how these practices contributed to the formation of both the material and epistemic object. Citation and information organization practices, social practices, and punctuation practices are not the only practices that go into the formation of an object like *Wu bei zhi*. For example, the production practices of printers and block carvers, the marketing practices of book sellers, and the reading practices of anonymous readers would all be relevant. Unfortunately, sources for many such practices are few and far between for the late Ming, so this dissertation limits itself to a close reading of the practices that do exist in surviving copies of *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi’s other writings.

Chapter 5 compares *Wu bei zhi* and other encyclopedic treatises and collectanea on technical topics relevant to statecraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and argues that *Wu bei zhi* is both representative of a genre and unique in that it uses all of the techniques and practices others of its kind use only in part. Chapter 6 examines surviving copies of various editions of *Wu bei zhi*, asking why we think of the title “*Wu bei zhi*” as a single object, when it is clear that the many material objects that are *Wu bei zhi* are quite different. Readers’ anecdotes regarding the value of *Wu bei zhi* and the implications of the placement of late-Qing readers’
marginalia are the focus of this chapter. Ultimately, Chapter 6 argues that the *Wu bei zhi* of the late Ming embodied the expertise and loyalty of its author. From the mid-nineteenth century forward, *Wu bei zhi* became inextricably tied with Han literati’s contemporary perceptions of the incompetence of the Manchu Qing government, and finally, in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with Han desires to reclaim the lost technical prowess of the Han people. Simultaneously, the habits of readers in extant Qing copies of *Wu bei zhi* show that late-Qing readers no longer read *Wu bei zhi* as a reference book, a repository of useful information, but as a symbol of the fecundity of Ming knowledge.

Ultimately, this dissertation both explodes *Wu bei zhi* the singular thing into a multiplicity of practices, and argues that the title *Wu bei zhi* and author, Mao Yuanyi, held a degree of cohesive meaning for readers in different spaces and times. Subtle changes in that meaning across time, however, correspond with changes in readerly praxis. In the late Ming, *Wu bei zhi* embodied Ming epistemic and social practices of encyclopedism and statecraft. The concomitant underlying epistemic assumptions of these practices betray great faith in the reliability of personal experience, textual records of historical experience, and the applicability of that experience in real life. These encyclopedic practices and the multiplicity of the information juxtaposed for evaluation by the reader in *Wu bei zhi*, however, simultaneously belie any confidence in a singular truth, and instead reveal confidence in the collection of information as a method of preparing for all possible contingencies in an unpredictable space and time. In the late Qing, readers were less confident in a multiplicity of truths, and lacked the patience to read through the pluralities of *Wu bei zhi*.

Regarding conventions, Pinyin romanization has been used throughout the dissertation to render Chinese names. Because of the number of people, place names, and book
titles mentioned, any sources quoted that originally used the Wade-Giles system have been silently switched to Pinyin to avoid confusion. Romanization systems aside from Wade-Giles or Pinyin have been left as originally spelled. Except for well-known titles with commonly accepted translations, book titles are referenced in Pinyin, followed by their title in Chinese characters and an English translation at first mention. Thereafter they are referred to by Pinyin alone. Chinese years were converted to the Gregorian calendar using the “Chinese and Western Calendars Mapping System” (中西曆轉換對照查詢) established by the Research Center for Digital Humanities at National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學數位人文研究中心). All translations into English are my own unless otherwise stated.
Chapter 2: A Community Mapped in Paper and Ink

2.1 Contents and Argument

This chapter dissects the reasons behind text selection, the ordering of textual excerpts, and citation practices in *Wu bei zhi*. Central to this process is envisioning *Wu bei zhi* as a materialization of a subset of the late-Ming library of information, specifically, specialized information on military studies. *Wu bei zhi* represents one reader’s enactment of a “library of information” for a community of literati who claimed expertise in military affairs. Recall from the introduction the constituent parts of Mary Elizabeth Berry’s “library of public information:” (1) an imagined audience; (2) books accessible to any anonymous buyer; (3) common interests; (4) common frames of reference and epistemic assumptions; (5) a common corpus of texts;\(^{129}\) and, I argue, common practices. Because of its collection and organization of textual excerpts, like other encyclopedic reference books, *Wu bei zhi* lends itself to mapping the textual corpus of one such figurative library—or common mental repertoire—a “concatenation of texts.”\(^{130}\)

Because reference works like *Wu bei zhi* foreground editorial practices such as collection and organization, they perform the compiler’s own expert reading skills and therefore his ideal library—how a reader should encounter it and in what order. If, as Stanley Fish argues, reading is an act of writing, of meaning production, this is nowhere more evident than in an encyclopedic reference work like *Wu bei zhi*, where most material is directly quoted from other sources. The compiler attributes little text to his own hand, and much text that he does claim justifies his own

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\(^{129}\) Berry, *Japan in Print*, 16–18, 22.

\(^{130}\) Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 90.
excerption strategies and prescribes reading strategies for his imagined audience. There is no way of knowing whether Mao’s record of his chosen excerpts from historical and technical texts specifically replicates his own initial encounter with these materials. However, we can read *Wu bei zhi* as a performance of expert readership. The citation and other editorial practices in *Wu bei zhi* enact a historically specific picture of the outlines of Mao’s ideal encounter with a library of information of military expertise. These practices also reveal editorial priorities and assumptions of veracity, and therefore epistemic frameworks and notions of literati expertise.

This chapter will rely on examination of Mao’s editorial practices and comparison with contemporaries to make a threefold argument. Firstly, I argue that the editorial practices and core of standard information in *Wu bei zhi* reveal an information library produced for an imagined audience of classically literate, aspiring statecraft experts. The content of *Wu bei zhi* is representative of a contemporary core of military texts and replicates reading and editorial practices and epistemic assumptions prevalent in the late Ming. Secondly, these practices make evident an epistemic framework wherein specialized knowledge of techniques and technologies is ideally verified via personal experience and observation, but in their absence, textual records of historical experiences and successes also serve to bolster the reliability of textual, technical sources. Such specialized knowledge was made legible to the classically literate against a background of strategic theory and commonly known historical sources. Lastly, although this was not the only criterion, expertise in military studies was, for literati like Mao, first and foremost mastery of this specialized textual corpus, and knowledge of its basis in historical

131 This is fundamentally different than the study of ideal readership that Dai Lianbin critiques in his work. It is also different from Dai’s own work in that we have access to an example of a reader performing example after example of reading as he expected his readers to read.
practice. *Wu bei zhi* performs literary competence, a sign of Mao’s potential mastery of praxis.132

### 2.2 A Road Map

This chapter will first describe *Wu bei zhi*’s general structure, contents, and the basic compilation and organizational practices Mao Yuanyi employs. Combined with a close reading of the prefaces to *Wu bei zhi*, this chapter identifies how Mao and his contemporaries position him as a literati expert on military affairs and what this meant for the nature of expertise in this period, especially for literate men. For Mao, mastery of the literature cited in *Wu bei zhi* sufficed to make one an expert member of a reading community, but what made an authority worth citing was considerably more complicated and can be understood better via the in-depth study of Mao’s citation practices.

The meat of this chapter engages in an analysis of *Wu bei zhi* as a curated library of information. For each of the five main, thematic sections of *Wu bei zhi*, it describes the corpus of texts quoted; the citation practices employed therein; and the minutia of practices of information organization. Because *Wu bei zhi* is an encyclopedic reference work and because military studies involves many different kinds of knowledge, we glimpse how editorial practices differed across the text to accommodate those differences. The uniquely assiduous arrangement of information across *Wu bei zhi* and within specific sections points to a set of assumptions about the process of learning and mastering technical knowledge held by its compiler. These sections of this chapter therefore dissect how Mao Yuanyi made technical knowledge legible to literati readers and further expose to what degree Mao ascribed validity to various kinds of sources, authors, and

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military practitioners. The result is a better understanding of both the making of knowledge in *Wu bei zhi* and the nature of expertise.

Our exploration of the five primary sections of *Wu bei zhi* shows that, as in Europe in this period, the “expert” was not an actors’ category in seventeenth-century China, but it remains a useful analytical category for describing someone who possessed specialized knowledge and could advise the state on relevant topics. Expertise was, ideally, legitimated by skill or experience in the practice of techniques or use of technologies. In this period in China, military expertise was both experiential and textual. Specialized military literacy for the classically literate was organized upon a foundation of historical, canonical, and familiar texts from their studies for the civil examinations, and texts that would have been canonical for the military examinations. Familiarity with these foundational texts allowed the reader to understand later chapters of *Wu bei zhi* that increasingly rely on and cite more recent, technical works by Ming authors. *Wu bei zhi* moves from strategy and tactics to the history of military events, then increasingly complex and obscure military techniques and technologies. As we move through each section of *Wu bei zhi* across this chapter, we find that for literati, mastery of this abstract library of information, and importantly, the history of changing strategies, technologies, and their application, especially their application in the immediate context of recent wars, was considered foundational to expert leadership.

Likewise, we will see that the episteme underlying this understanding of military expertise or literacy relied on the mutual validation of textual and experienced evidence. Information from experienced military officials who were also classically literate or civil

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officials with military experience was considered the most reliable, especially information compiled or produced by late-Ming actors. By placing newer, obscure knowledge against a well-known background of military strategy and history, Mao Yuanyi positioned innovative, new knowledge in a historical space in which the empirical results might be tested. While ideally, personal observation and experience (and therefore expertise) attested to the validity of a piece of information, textual testimony was an acceptable alternative and necessary pillar of support. This textual way of enacting empirical sympathies is on display in *Wu bei zhi*.

This chapter ends with a brief exploration of just how comparable the textual corpus or “library” enacted between the leaves of *Wu bei zhi* is to that found in lists of military books in contemporary bibliographies and libraries. Given its organizational principles and the assumptions made of the reader’s prior knowledge, we can see that the community of readers that engages with these physical libraries and Mao’s imagined audience is primarily composed of classically literate readers interested in statecraft. Ultimately, this chapter describes how Mao’s assumptions about the reliability of information and knowledge were enacted in *Wu bei zhi* by historicizing the editorial practices of Mao and his interpretive community, and the library of information which Mao replicated in *Wu bei zhi*.

### 2.3 Encyclopedism and Heroism: The Basics and Prefaces of *Wu bei zhi*

In order to understand just how *Wu bei zhi* replicates the categories and practices of contemporary book collectors and readers, it is helpful to first understand the overall structure of the text. *Wu bei zhi* contains 240 chapters and compiles information on military philosophy, strategy, history, troop formations, weaponry, supplies, divination, forecasting, and geography. As discussed in the introduction, *Wu bei zhi* is organized in a format similar to a *leishu* or
category book, but not identical. The format is geared to comprehensively systematizing all categories of available information about the military, and can safely be described as “encyclopedic.” *Wu bei zhi* is divided into five major sections: (1) “Critiques of Military Formulae” (*Bingjue ping* 兵訣評); (2) “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy” (*Zhanlìe kao* 戰略考); (3) “Systems of Troop Formations and Training” (*Zhen lian zhi* 阵練制); (4) “Military Supplies and Transport” (*Junzi sheng* 軍資乘); (5) “Record of Divination and Geography” (*Zhan du zai* 占度載). These are further divided into thematic subsections. Two tables of contents precede the main text, a comprehensive table of contents (*zongmu* 總目) and table of chapters (*juanmu* 卷目). These finding tools allow navigating to specific chapters and topics within chapters. At the beginning of each thematic section and, if applicable, subsection, Mao provides an introduction to most topics, attributed to himself, then proceeds to quote, in chronological order of composition, excerpts from famous (and not-so-famous) texts. Mao’s editing strategy in the making of *Wu bei zhi* was to copy, paste, and reorganize past military and historical texts thematically with his own introductions to each section and *printed* marginal comments as a guide to his imagined readers. In copying, pasting, citing, and commenting on these past texts, Mao positions himself as a reader in a community of elites aspiring to literacy in military affairs, past and present, which would allow them to advise the state as civil officials or members of the gentry.

In his own preface, Mao explicitly addresses the structure, content, and purpose of *Wu bei zhi* in relation to military expertise and its importance for civil officials in the climate of the

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134 Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi yanjiu,*” 33.
early seventeenth century. Mao Yuanyi is particularly concerned with the growing power of civil officials over military officials, and the ignorance of the former. He writes that before the Ming dynasty, the “civil” (wen 文) and “martial” (wu 武) were studied together, but they have been kept separate since the Hongwu (1368–1399) and Xuande (1426–1436) reigns. He writes:

Since the Hongwu (1368-1399) and the Xuande (1426-1436) reigns, the authority of civil commanders has increased daily. This is [what happens when] the ignorant control what [others] know; it is to limit what they learn and then hold them responsible for their efficacy.

Here, Mao identifies a structural problem with the Ming government’s empowering of civil officials at the expense of the authority of military officials, and not giving civil officials an opportunity to study military affairs before blaming them for their errors. He also argues that superiors in the civil bureaucracy choose military leaders from both the civil and military official ranks based on who makes the biggest show of their reaction to news of military defeat.

Regarding the rise of the Jurchens, he writes:

Thus, when the Eastern barbarians rose up, the gentry looked to each other in fear. Of the civil officials (wenshi 文士), those who throw their sleeves and talk, and of the military men (wubian 武弁), those who can don armor and gallop away, all these are considered able to command. Their superiors select their inferiors on this basis, and on this basis evaluate candidates. Without principles or shame, they say, “The miraculous and brilliant abides in their persons!” But, alas! No one person has both sharp sight and hearing.

故東胡一日起，士大夫相顧惶駭，文士投袂而言者，武弁能介而馳者，即以爲可將。上以此求下，以此應計。無所之則，覈顚而曰：「神而明之存乎其人也」。嗟乎！一人之身聰明無兩具也。136

135 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, Volume 23, 1b–2a.
136 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, Volume 23, 2a–2b.
Mao then argues that *Wu bei zhi* is an attempt to address the structural problems that have led to poor military leadership by providing civil officials access to information on military affairs. He writes:

I was personally saddened by this [officials’ ignorance of military affairs]. I composed [the section] “Critiques of Military Formulae.” In military methods, none surpass the six schools. I combed out their obstructions, cut out a mess of old notes, pointed out the important parts, and also illuminated the mistakes of the old explications. For example, *Weigong’s Questions and Answers, Hidden Classic of Venus,* and *Tiger Key Classic* are texts by which I’ve annotated the six schools.137 I’ve combined all of these texts and published them [together]. Zeng Xuanjing considered them deep and difficult to probe; Ma Duansu considered them hidden and didn’t exhaust their limits.138 They avoid many things. I composed [the section] “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy.” Ancient strategy can be seen in the histories and in biographies. Some have collected it into books, but these suffer from inadequacy. Some have arranged this information in lists, but these suffer from infinitesimal division. Today, I have ordered them chronologically. For events that assuredly happened, I supplement it with more methods. I indeed rely on the old and find the threads of the new. Those of a mind to do so can achieve all of this.

余悲之，爲作兵訣評，兵訣無過於六家。爲疏其滯，而又刪舊註之煩，標其要而，又明舊解之憊，若《衛公問答》、《太白》、《虎鈐》二經，所以注疏六家者也。并表而出之曾宣靖以爲深而難究，馬端肅以爲隱而莫窮，庶其免矣。爲作戰略考，

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137 The “six schools” refers to the six of the *Seven Military Classics* (*Wujing qishu* 武經七書) composed before the Qin dynasty 221–206 BCE. The other titles quoted here are later military texts. More on these below.

138 Xuanjing 宣靖 is the posthumous name of Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 (999–1078), the author of *Wujing zongyao* 武經總要 (Summary of essentials in the military classics), an authoritative, Song-dynasty military text, more on this later. Duansu 端肅 was the posthumous name for Ma Wensheng 马文升 (1426–1510), a famous Ming dynasty official. See Guoli zhongyang tushuguan, *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin*, 409. The language Mao uses to describe this information is intended to paint the classics as profound repositories of obscure knowledge. The classics may not have been that difficult to read. This is a common rhetorical move. The books that are considered “classic” in any particular field of study in pre-modern China were generally the oldest works in that genre, attributed to some mythical figure. Authoritative interpretations of those classics would often become the standard reference material by which any other interpretation was measured. Zhu Xi’s interpretations of *Mencius* are one such example. Mao apparently intends to use *Great White Tiger Classic of Strategy* and *Duke Wei’s Questions and Answers* in this capacity.
Here, in addition to explicitly stating that he intends to provide difficult-to-access information, Mao outlines the principles behind the content and organization of the first two sections of *Wu bei zhi* “Critiques of Military Formulae” and “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy.” Mao then goes on to explain the same for the other three sections of *Wu bei zhi*. These will all be explained in more detail below, but suffice it to say here that Mao has connected the ignorance of civil officials regarding military affairs to a lack of appropriate leadership to deal with the Jurchen crisis. In the context of increasing power of civil officials over military commanders, Mao proposes the collection, organization, and distribution of information on military affairs as a solution to this ignorance.

Mao Yuanyi is not the only person who affirms this particular conceptualization of textual expertise for civil officials. Contemporaries of Mao who wrote the prefaces to *Wu bei zhi* echo his claims regarding the importance of collecting exhaustive information and organizing it in a searchable manner; reinforce Mao’s claims that civil officials also need a degree of expertise in military affairs; and underscore the importance of Mao’s work to the production of more civilian expertise for a dynasty that struggled to build an effective military defense. For example, Gu Qiyuan 顧起元 (1565–1628) describes Mao’s efforts to make available books otherwise inaccessible to most scholars. He writes the following of Mao in his preface to *Wu bei zhi*:

> Others thought the things Mao studied were akin to the same old things that elderly scholars natter about. Moreover other rare classics and secret documents are mostly seen scattered amongst bug-eaten books, deeply locked away. There are none who could fish

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for and net their totality. Mao then generously took out the books in his book chest, and by himself categorized and edited that which he had spent a lifetime arranging.

True to the form of laudatory prefaces, all of the prefatory authors to the 1621 edition of *Wu bei zhi* tout Mao’s work as an unprecedented effort to organize otherwise inaccessible works—a work of genius! They are all, like Gu, particularly taken with the efforts to which Mao went to collect obscure books and use them to annotate classic works of military strategy. Mao, they say, was unique in his obsessive and exhaustive scholarly habits, and unique in his realization that scholarship on the military should be valued. The literary (*wen*) and the martial (*wu*) should not be separated. For example, contrary to popular opinion, Zhang Shiyi 張師繹 argues, Confucius, model for all literati, was very well-versed in military affairs. Such preparedness must begin with literacy and virtue, he says. However, these prefatory authors also made a point of mentioning that Mao’s expertise was, although based in texts, applicable to and relied upon by military men.


141 This will not be the only mention of secrecy in prefaces to *Wu bei zhi*. While, theoretically, much military information would have been prohibited from circulation and labeled “state secrets,” especially maps, these rules were poorly enforced. Instead, a tension between knowledge that was considered “secret” and the desire to educate civil officials existed. See Brook, “Traces of the Zheng He Voyages in Late Ming Navigational Materials,” 253. This should be differentiated from the “secret” transmission of knowledge in, for example, medical or Daoist lineages.

Gu Qiyuan writes that Mao Yuanyi’s knowledge wasn’t merely literary: swordsmen and generals didn’t hesitate to consult with him—or follow him. Gu writes:

In periods of anxiety when affairs came to a head, his extraordinary talent was consulted. Swordsmen discussed and practiced with him. Therefore, when he speaks of the military strategists, he is able to critique their key joints, and probe their mysteries. So it is that when brave men and veteran commanders speak with Mao, none are unwilling to give him their weapons.

蒿目時事所至訪其奇才，劍客與之討論而肄習，故于兵家者言得以批其肯綮而探其潭奧。即嚄唶宿將與君語，又亡不願奉鞬橐。143

Here, Gu Qiyuan has used the faith of men with training in martial arts and experience in the field to verify the reliability of Mao Yuanyi’s knowledge of military affairs. For civil officials, expertise needed to be both practicable and textual. Civil officials with reliable knowledge of the military were enormously important in times when the Jurchen in Liaodong threatened the very being of the dynasty. Li Weizhen’s 李維楨 (1547–1626) preface assures us that the military crisis in Liaodong at the end of the Wanli period left Mao feeling as though he could keep silent no more! (Hence this tome.)144 Zhang Shiyi sums up the immoderate rhetoric in these prefaces by crediting Mao’s writing with achieving victory in war: “The congratulations for victory in war will belong not to the plans of the court, but to this scholar of the people on the day this book was declared finished.”145 The collection of texts by someone with reliable knowledge, verified by experienced generals, was critical to the dynasty’s success.

143 Gu Qiyuan, “Preface,” in Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, 2a–b.
144 Li Weizhen, “Preface,” in Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, 1a–2a.
The prefaces Mao solicited for *Wu bei zhi* all make somewhat extreme claims regarding Mao’s practical expertise and his mastery, collection, and organization of material and its import for the dynasty. Exaggerated or not, the prefaces lead readers to the conclusion that Mao had been more exhaustive in his research than any other before him, and that exhaustive search yielded practicable results for policy. This despite the fact that Mao, prior to writing this work, had seen no combat.\(^{146}\) *Wu bei zhi*’s status as an authoritative text worthy of attention rests mostly on its author’s claims to familiarity with the corpus of texts that shapes his expert community and his ability to make available useful texts to which others did not have access.

The question remains, what did Mao actually do when he collected material from other texts and assembled it in *Wu bei zhi*? Song Xian’s 宋献 (active 1622) preface claims that Mao used over 2,000 books (not including secretly transmitted texts) to compile *Wu bei zhi*.\(^{147}\) Song writes:

The books he collected amount to more than two thousand, yet that does not account for secret diagrams and handwritten volumes. He exceeded the collections of previous people by almost 10,000 chapters, yet that does not account for the books [he] passed around, borrowed, and sought in all directions.

\(^{146}\) Masato Hasegawa makes the important point that Mao’s expertise was, at the time *Wu bei zhi* was published, based entirely on his extensive reading. Mao had not yet served in the Ming military. This makes his case for his own authority to speak entirely based on the libraries of texts available to him. For an effective study of how Mao’s ideas on technologies of transport might have actually affected military practices in his time, see Hasegawa, “Provisions and Profits,” 247–309.

\(^{147}\) This claim often gets repeated, if only to note contemporary claims regarding *Wu bei zhi*’s comprehensiveness. See Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* yanjiu,” 42 and others. Song Xian, “Preface,” in Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, 1b.
The claim that Mao relied on 2,000 books to compile *Wu bei zhi* is unverifiable. Zhao Na has counted 93 titles explicitly quoted in *Wu bei zhi*. While organizing 240 chapters of material from 93 texts is no small feat, neither is it quite the same as organizing material from 2,000. In this section, rhetorical claims like this from the prefaces to *Wu bei zhi* suggest that the prefatory authors shared a notion of military expertise with Mao Yuanyi wherein mastery of texts and practices mutually verified each other. Instead of these rhetorical claims, the next sections of this chapter will explore the actual editorial practices of Mao Yuanyi as they appear in each of the five major sections of *Wu bei zhi*, and what these practices meant for the shape of the seventeenth-century library of information, its associated episteme, and notions of expertise.

2.4 **Citation and Organization Practices in *Wu bei zhi*: Revealing the Episteme**

For each of the five major sections of *Wu bei zhi*, I will outline the collection of sources on which Mao draws; the organizational practices he employs to organize the information; and, finally, the citation practices he uses to help the reader situate that information within the corpus of texts they might already know. If *Wu bei zhi* embodied a specialized library of information on military affairs, how did Mao expect the reader to make sense of the information therein? This specialized corpus of texts overlapped with the more generalized corpus of texts read or memorized by the classically literate who participated in the civil examinations, and relied on

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149 Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi yanjiu*,” 52–55.
this generalized, common library to make any sense. The first two major sections of *Wu bei zhi* deal with military theory and history. Later sections of *Wu bei zhi* deal with what we might think of as bodily, physical, and social techniques and technologies. The first two sections dealing with the strategy, tactics, and their history rely on the *Seven Military Classics* and historical texts exclusively. Neither group of texts would have been unfamiliar to literati readers. The physically embodied techniques, technologies, and information of later sections demand sources that were far less commonly read by literati preparing for the civil examinations. These chapters demonstrate increased reliance on military and other technical texts written and published in the Ming dynasty, rather than early, canonical texts necessary to either the civil or military examinations. Regardless of the source, information in all sections but the very last is organized chronologically. Older information is presented first, and the new is justified as a successful application or innovation upon the old.

As the corpora of texts for each section of *Wu bei zhi* differed, so too did citation practices change. For the first two sections on strategy and history, minimalist citation practices point towards a set of intellectual practices with which Mao and readers were intimately familiar from studying for the civil examinations.\(^{150}\) Citations in later sections on materially embodied techniques and technologies increase in specificity regarding title and author attribution when the name of the author is immediately recognizable as an author with a record of successful military praxis. However, as soon as the source text and its author were too obscure for the title or name to mean anything to a literati reader, citation of technical information immediately declined in

\(^{150}\) Minimalist citation practices were not only the province of texts relevant to the civil examinations. Other genres that relied on canonical texts engaged in similar minimalist practices. Think, for example, of medical texts that felt no need to specify text borrowed from the *Huangdi neijing* (Inner canon of the Yellow Lord).
specificity. If citation did nothing to further situate a textual excerpt or technical image in the scaffolding of knowledge constructed in *Wu bei zhi*, then it was considered unnecessary. We might think of citation practices arranged on a bell curve, where the X-axis represents a source’s distance from the core of the specialized library of information on military affairs, and the Y-axis represents the degree of specificity of a citation used for that source. The absolute core needs no introduction, and introduction to the absolute peripheries is meaningless. The sources in the middle of the curve produced by experienced military officials of recent times require Mao’s maximum attention to detail.

### 2.4.1 Critiques of Military Formulae (*Bingjue ping* 兵訣評)

*Wu bei zhi* begins with a section titled *Bingjue ping* 兵訣評, which I have translated as “Critiques of Military Formulae” (hereafter, “Critiques”). “Critiques” consists of 18 chapters. This section contains excerpts from the *Seven Military Classics* (*Wu jing qi shu* 武經七書) and a few other works that Mao sees as important commentaries on those texts, in particular, on *Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法 (Sunzi’s art of war). The section deals in abstract military strategy or military philosophy. The *Seven Military Classics* were combined in the Song Dynasty (960–1279) to form the required texts for official military examinations.\(^{151}\) These would have been texts deeply familiar to aspirants to a career as an officer in both the Song and Ming official military apparatus—if not memorized as civil examinees would memorize the four books and one of the

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five classics.\textsuperscript{152} Even though strategic thought of the late Ming had developed well beyond the limits of the \textit{Seven Military Classics}, those developments were almost always couched in terms that assumed knowledge of these texts.

Before progressing to more obscure and less well trodden kinds of military knowledge, a student had to first master both the content and vocabulary in the \textit{Seven Military Classics}, as they shaped an integral discursive space within which experts on textual knowledge of military affairs operated. According to Mao, the most important text among these is \textit{Sunzi}. The preface to this section reads:

Master Mao says: “From ancient times, those who discuss the military must start with \textit{Sun Wuzi}. Therefore Cao Mengde annotated it himself, and also made \textit{Bingjia jieyao} in 200,000 words, which supposedly collects the various masters and explicates \textit{Sunzi}. Today, there exists \textit{Wuhou xinshu}; it too illuminates \textit{Sunzi}, but it is a forgery, and it passes no judgment. Mengde’s book was not transmitted. And yet, \textit{Sunzi} still exists; those who have the mind to can, with intention, meet it; other books can remain un-transmitted. As for those who spoke of military affairs before the Qin there were six experts. Those who came before \textit{Sunzi}, \textit{Sunzi} did not neglect; those who came after \textit{Sunzi} could not neglect \textit{Sunzi}. It could be said that these [other] five experts were writing commentaries for \textit{Sunzi}. Therefore, I put \textit{Sun Wuzi} first and follow it with \textit{Wuzi}, using their words to verify the various masters. [I] follow this with \textit{Sima fa}, then [\textit{Liu} tao], then [\textit{San} lüe], in order to complete the set. Next is \textit{Wei Liaozi}, if one uses it to understand the meaning of directing soldiers, one can supplement the various experts and implement them. I complete the section with \textit{Li Weigong wen da}, \textit{Li Quan’s Taibai yin jing}, and \textit{Xu Dong’s Huqian jing}, because their words are all that by which the six experts are solemnly explained, like the \textit{Changes} have Jing Jiao, and the \textit{Spring and Autumn Annals} have the three commentaries. \textit{Taibai} was originally eight \textit{juan}; I’ve recorded three of them here. \textit{Huqian} was originally twenty \textit{juan}; I’ve recorded five because the rest speak to

\textsuperscript{152} Li Yu has described how important memorization was to the process of learning to read itself, which involved first memorizing “the sound” of well-known texts, and then learning the characters that represented those sounds. Yu, “A History of Reading in Late Imperial China, 1000–1800,” 50. On the memorization requirements for the civil examinations, see Elman, \textit{A Cultural History of Civil Examinations}, 282–286.
establishing of methods, not formulae. I combine the nine experts and make them into Bingjue ping. In short, those who are studying military formulae can just study Sunzi.

Mao doesn’t mention the Seven Military Classics by this name, but names each text in this group. The seven texts are Sunzi bingfa, Wuzi bingfa 吳子兵法 (Master Wu’s methods of war), Sima bingfa 司馬兵法 (War Minister’s methods of war), Liu Tao 六韜 (The six strategic plans), San lüe 三略 (Three strategies), Wei Liaozi 尉繚子 (Master Wei Liao), and Tang Taizong Li Weigong wendui 唐太宗李衛公問對 (Questions and answers between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong). Sunzi bingfa, often, and here, referred to simply as Sunzi, is the work of Sun Wu 孫武 of the State of Qi, who lived toward the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BC).154

153 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, “Bingjue ping,” juan 1, 1a-b.

154 SKDCD, 1612. Wuzi bingfa is often attributed to Wu Qi 吳起 (?–381BC) of the State of Wei, a politician of the beginning of the Warring States period, and likely compiled by his students. SKDCD, 1613. Sima bingfa, is sometimes attributed to Sima Rangju 司馬穰苴, a general of the State of Qi in the Spring and Autumn period, but likely compiled by state ministers of Qi at the beginning of the Warring States period. SKDCD, 1614. Sima bingfa, or Sima fa, is now dated to approximately the fourth century BC, and thought to be a compilation of the ideas of various ministers of war regarding strategy and governance. Only five chapters remain from what was supposedly 155 in the Han Dynasty, and it is these that are included in the Seven Military Classics. Sawyer, The Seven Military Classics, 111–115. Liu tao was attributed to Tai Gong 太公 (the grand duke), or Jiang Shang 姜尚,
I listed the *Seven Military Classics* above in the order given in the preface and in *Wu bei zhi*, an order that Mao says is shaped by the texts’ relationships with *Sunzi*. The *Seven Military Classics* were listed in a slightly different order in the approved examination texts by that title, beginning in the Song dynasty. That order was as follows: *Sunzi, Wuzi, Sima fa, Li Weigong wen dui, Weiliaozi, San lüe*, and *Liu tao*. Mao’s placement of these texts differs from both the traditional ordering and the approximate date of the composition and compilation of the material therein.155

otherwise known as Jiang Ziya (above), or the Grand Duke Jiang 姜太公, or the Grand Duke of Qi 齐太公 who helped Kings Wen and Wu of Zhou (1046 BC–256 BC) overthrow the Shang dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC). It was known fairly early on to be a text borrowing his name, but written by others. SKDCD, 1615. *San lüe* is also traditionally attributed to Tai Gong, and supposedly passed down to Zhang Liang 張良 (250 BC–186 BC) via “Duke of the Yellow Stone” (*Huangshi gong* 黄石公), supposedly an immortal or descendant of the State of Qi’s historian (or both). Traditional backstory aside, Xu Baolin has argued that it is likely the product of the end of the Western Han dynasty around the year 0. See Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 281–284 and Xu Baolin, *Zhongguo bingshu tonglan*, 125. *Wei Liaozi* is supposedly itinerant adviser Wei Liao’s 尉缭 (lengthy) advice to King Hui of Liang (梁惠王) on the military. According to Ralph Sawyer, the book reached its final form prior to the Han dynasty. The text held in the *Seven Military Classics* appears to be composed of two different books, the first half focusing on “grand strategy” and the second on the practical details of running an army. Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 231–232. *Li Weigong wen dui* is attributed to Li Jing 李靖 (571–679), a general who helped expand the territory of the early Tang dynasty (618–907) and was a close adviser of the second emperor of the Tang, Tang Taizong 唐太宗, or Li Shimin 李世民 (598–649). Tang Taizong is Li Weigong’s interlocutor in *Li Weigong wen dui*. Sawyer states that most scholars believe this book was composed or compiled in the late Tang/early Northern Song. However, it cannot be ruled out that it might be the result of others compiling notes on a conversation that did take place. SKDCD, 1617. Note that *Li Weigong wendui* is mentioned in a quotation from Mao Yuanyi on page 55 of this chapter, though its title is abbreviated.

155 Ralph D. Sawyer identifies four basic periods during which the *Seven Military Classics* were likely authored or compiled. Sawyer combines the material in *Sima fa*, some generated as early as the early Zhou (from approximately 1046 BC to 781 BC), and *Sunzi*, a product of the Spring and Autumn period (781–481 BC), into an “Initial Period.” During the “second period,” *Wuzi* is written (Warring States). *Weiliaozi, Liu tao*, and *San lüe* belong to the “Third Period.” The first two were likely composed during the Warring States period at the latest,
Mao’s own categorization of these texts is not dictated by their traditional order as laid out in the Song edition of the *Seven Military Classics*, but rather their relationship to *Sunzi*. In the preface to the “Critiques” section, quoted above, Mao refers not to the seven classics, but rather to the *six schools* (*liu jia 六家*), meaning the six of these seven texts that were believed to have been composed before the Qin dynasty. He argues that the other five that he dates to before the Qin (*Wuzi, Sima fa, Liu tao, San lüe*, and *Wei Liaozi*), can be considered mere commentaries on *Sunzi*. *Sunzi* and *Wuzi* are the yardsticks by which the other “masters” are verified or measured. *Sima fa, Liu tao* and *San lüe*, Mao writes, complete the pre-Qin set in which *Sunzi* and *Wuzi* are included. *Wei Liaozi*, Mao implies, includes information on themes quite different from the previous five listed. *Wei Liaozi* includes information on how to direct soldiers, presumably, how to get them to implement the strategies outlined in the other texts. These pre-Qin (according to Mao) texts form core of Mao’s library of military information.

It is with reference to these texts that all texts construct further knowledge of military strategy, tactics, and practice, even the last of the *Seven Military Classics*, *Li Weigong wen dui*. In fact, despite being a part of the official military examination canon in both the Song and Ming, Mao puts *Li Weigong wen dui* in the same category as two later texts, all of which he considers “that by which the six schools are solemnly explained.” For Mao, *Li Weigong wen dui* and these two later texts are comparable to the standard commentarial traditions on the

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and the third, at the beginning of the Western Han dynasty (206 BC–9 AD). Sawyer orders his translations of each of the *Seven Military Classics* in order of the historical period to which their content refers, which is not the same as the order in which they were first written down. Chronological by the historical period they discuss, Sawyer’s order is as follows: *Liu tao, Sima fa, Sunzi, Wuzi, Weiliaozi, San lüe*, and *Li Weigong wen dui*. See Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 16–18. On the composition dates of *Weiliaozi, Liu tao*, and *San lüe*, see SKDCD, 1615–1616.
Confucian classics, which were required study for the civil examination system. The grouping here provides a mild challenge to the established hierarchy, one unlikely to have been lost on readers trained in reading the *Seven Military Classics* as a whole. However, neither is this a completely unexpected challenge, for argument by privileging the old over the new was an expected tactic. *Wu bei zhi* holds the oldest texts in highest esteem for the flexible applicability of the general principles they espouse. The other two texts considered commentarial here are Li Quan’s 李筌 *Taibai yin jing* 太白陰經 (Hidden classic of Venus, Tang dynasty 618–907) and Xu Dong’s 許洞 (c. 1030) *Huqian jing* 虎鈐經 (Tiger key classic).\(^\text{156}\) Mao includes only portions of these last two texts in this section, as the other portions are not relevant to the strategic concerns of the six pre-Qin masters, but deal with more concrete affairs. Those chapters will be quoted in different sections of *Wu bei zhi*, but “Critiques” is primarily concerned with the strategic principles by which detailed practical measures, plans, and technical discussion can be justified.

Of note in the very first paragraph of *Wu bei zhi* are a number of principles by which the book orders its contents. The six pre-Qin schools are considered a core standard of strategic theory against which all else will be measured. They are thus repositories of key principles susceptible to interpretation based on historical circumstance, but unchanging in their status as referents. These texts are grouped chronologically, and those that come earliest are considered to be the first to have developed basic, correct principles. Later texts at least nominally apply them to current circumstances. Newer knowledge is justified, or, in Mao’s words, “verified” by

\(^{156}\) Venus governed military activity, hence the title of Li Quan’s book. For more detail on the astronomical and divinatory content of *Taibai yinjing*, see Ho, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology*, 85–86, 105–106, 136. These texts were mentioned in Mao’s preface to *Wu bei zhi* on page 56 of this chapter.
measuring it against the principles in these texts. Any expert worth his salt will have knowledge of both. *Wu bei zhi* builds another layer of its textual foundation in the next section.

### 2.4.2 [Historical] Investigations of Strategy (*Zhanlüe kao* 戰略考)

“[Historical] Investigations of Strategy” (hereafter, “Investigations”) contains Chapters 19–51 and essentially, compiles excerpted texts narrating historical military events, and builds on the foundational theoretical texts of “Critiques.” “Investigations” begins with a preface that directly addresses the sources on which the section is based and the logic for including historical material. “Investigations” mines histories of various genres for precise examples of successful strategies and tactics that fit paradigmatic military quandaries. Mao writes:

> As for the affairs of past and present, they have different forms but are the same fundamental circumstances. If the fundamental circumstances are the same, then techniques can be shared. As for the people of past and present, they encounter different fundamental circumstances but also specific situations that are the same. If the affairs are the same, then their fundamental meaning can be followed as a past model. Thus, I lay them out as resources for today.

> 古今之事, 異形而同情, 情同則法可通, 古今之人, 異情而同事, 事同則意可祖, 故我列著之以為今之資。\(^{157}\)

Ancient situations that are comparable to those faced in Mao’s present demanded strategies akin to those applied in the past. However, not all historical sources give equally clear explanations of important, model events. Mao complains that many Song and Ming texts specializing in military anecdotes or biographies are “all chopped up and inappropriate for use.” Mao finds only one

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\(^{157}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 19, 1a.
such text “sufficiently detailed.” Instead, he relies on the official and unofficial histories and excerpts them himself. Mao describes his process as follows:

I compiled and edited the various schools based on both the official and unofficial histories and with this made “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy.” I speak of strategy, and so if [the material] is not a strategy it is not recorded; if the strategy isn’t marvelous, then it isn’t recorded. Every time I raise an example, it is sufficient to advance one’s purposes.

From these excerpts, we can see that this preface describes a few fundamental editorial choices. Firstly, Mao chooses to delete material irrelevant to strategy (see the quotation immediately above). Secondly, Mao selects only “marvelous” strategies that work as exemplars applicable in comparable situations across time. Thirdly, accounts of historical events in texts that employ Mao’s own strategy of slicing and dicing, copying and pasting, snipping and gluing are considered insufficiently detailed. Rather than slicing and dicing already disorganized chunks, Mao draws from official and unofficial histories directly. These are the stated editorial principles,

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158 The passage where Mao complains of books composed of abridged biographies and excerpts reads: “In the Song, there was Baizhan qifa 百戰奇法 (Marvelous methods of one hundred wars), following this, there was Baijiang zhuan 百將傳 (Biographies of one hundred generals), Xu bai jiang zhuan 續百將傳, (Expanded biographies of one hundred generals), and Shi lüe zhan zong 史略戰宗 (Historical excerpts concerning the roots of war). More recently, there was Zhushi jianglüe 諸史將略 (Strategies of the generals in the various histories), Yunchou gangmu 運籌綱目 (General outline of operational strategy), and Juesheng gangmu 決勝綱目 (General outline on determining victory). They all are chopped up and inappropriate for use; only Jiangshi binglan 姜氏兵覽 (Military conspectus of Mr. Jiang) is more or less [sufficiently] detailed (宋有百戰奇法，繼有百將傳，續百將傳，史略戰宗，近有諸史將略，運籌綱目，決勝綱目，皆鈔割而無當，唯姜氏兵覽差詳).” Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 1a.

159 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 1a–1b.
and for the most part, Mao Yuanyi sticks to these principles throughout “Investigations.” However, observing Mao’s practices in detail uncovers some that Mao might have felt too obvious to be worthy of comment, but are critical to our understanding of the work of *Wu bei zhi* and epistemic practice therein.

The organization of the material in “Investigations,” the source texts for that material, and the citation practices used are all indicative of a classically literate imagined audience. The practices of citation and organization established here are the basis on which the reader makes sense of and validates more obscure technical knowledge found in later sections. Benjamin Elman has defined literacy for Ming and Qing literati as the skills that separated the examination literate from the semi-literate hoi polloi. This involved three steps: memorizing characters; reading the Four Books, the Five Classics, and the dynastic histories; and, lastly, learning to write. Elman distinguishes between primer literacy and classical literacy. The latter is the kind of literacy possessed by Mao’s ideal readers—those who would have read and memorized the Four Books, at least one of the Five Classics, and studied the dynastic histories. This literacy would have been, in Elman’s terms, the most “empowering” kind, that which enabled full participation in the examination system and access to elite social networks. This kind of literacy is on display in “Investigations.”

Each section of *Wu bei zhi* begins with a table of contents, in addition to the preface that Mao claims as his own. The primary principle of organization for “Investigations” is again chronological. The table of contents for “Investigations” organizes the section by dynastic

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161 See Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China*, 126–146; and Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, xxx, 266, 376.
period, not text. The body text is quoted from both official dynastic histories and common unofficial histories. Depending on the period, Mao quotes from the Confucian Classics, well-known pre-Qin texts of other traditions, official histories of various dynasties, and unofficial histories. The historical incidents related in “Investigations” are important entities on their own, and can often be found in multiple sources. It was not the name of a given source text that was necessary for a reader to find a well-known model strategy, but rather knowledge of when the model incident took place.

The choice to organize the material chronologically had much to do with the diversity of possible source texts often used to prepare for the civil examinations. It is important to understand that the library of texts on which literati built classical literacy did not merely consist of official dynastic histories. For “Investigations,” the most important sources were not the official histories themselves, but the unofficial histories and abridgements of official histories that readers might have had access to. For the earliest period, the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE), *Wu bei zhi* primarily quotes historical anecdotes from the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳 (Zuo commentary [on the Spring and Autumn Annals]). For the Warring States period (475–221 BCE), most anecdotes used in *Wu bei zhi* can be traced back to *Zhangguo ce* 戰國策 (Strategies of the Warring States, dated to the Western Han) or the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian, first century BCE). However, the quotations from these histories often follow wording used in the retelling of those anecdotes from unofficial histories such as *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (Comprehensive examination of literature and documents, 1307), by Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–1323), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror in aid of governance, 1084) by Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086) and *Tong zhi* 通志 (Comprehensive
treatise), by Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104–1162). The annalistic histories listed above were widely read as supplements to the dynastic histories. In fact, Dai Lianbin has argued that Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130–1200) abridgement of Zizhi tongjian, titled Zizhi tongjian gangmu 資治通鑒綱目 (Outline of the comprehensive mirror in aid of governance), was more widely read than Zizhi tongjian itself.¹⁶² Wu bei zhi’s choice of quotations is representative of reading and study practices of seventeenth century elites.

We cannot say definitively that there was an expectation that some readers would recognize the exact wording of the text from the Zuozhuan, for example, or any of the histories cited above, but it is not unlikely that they did. It was not unheard of for children to learn to recite the Zuozhuan along with other texts. After memorizing a text, they might use the memorized version alongside a written version to learn characters.¹⁶³ It is also entirely likely that readers would have been familiar with the retelling of these stories from the unofficial histories and memorizing pieces of the histories themselves. Dai Lianbin has demonstrated that Zhu Xi advocated the memorization of key events in the histories as part of his program for learning to read.¹⁶⁴ The sources drawn on in “Investigations” replicate the “bibliographic terrain,” as He Yuming puts it, of the historical reading necessary for the civil examinations.

Likewise, the citation practices (or lack thereof) used in “Investigations” indicate that Mao Yuanyi imagined his readers needed no direction in finding the source texts where the historical events recounted therein might be found, and little direction understanding the

importance of any given excerpt. Mao generally does not outright cite the text from which these excerpts or summarized stories are taken. This is entirely different from the other sections of the text. “Investigations” doesn’t introduce quotations with a title for an event, the author of a book from which it is taken, or the title of a book. It simply summarizes the political entities or actors involved and dives into the event. The entries do not bother defining who the states and people involved are. Categorization of the entry in a particular dynastic period is considered clue enough. A few examples below illustrate how closely the quotations in “Investigations” follow summaries of stories from standard histories and the unofficial histories that were commonly used to study those standard histories. These examples also illustrate exactly what Wu bei zhi expects the reader to already know in order to make meaning of a passage, and how very close to the core of the library these texts dwelled.

The third passage in Wu bei zhi’s section on the Spring and Autumn period reads as follows. In both the English translation and the Chinese original, commentarial insertions are in parentheses and underlined (as such):

King Wu of Chu invaded Sui and had [Yuan] Zhang seek an accord with them. (Chu rethought this, and first made its senior official, Yuan Zhang, seek a treaty in Sui.) The king stationed his troops at Xia to await [Yuan] Zhang’s return. The Sui leaders sent an adjutant to manage the peace negotiations. Dou Bobi spoke to the Master of Chu: “If we do not achieve our aims east of the Han River, then we have only ourselves to blame. Having swollen the ranks of our three armies and having put on our armor and weapons, we approach Sui in martial display. Our enemies are afraid and have united to plot against us. That is why it will be difficult to foment discord among them. Sui is the largest of the domains east of the Han River. If Sui becomes swollen with pride, it must disregard the interests of the smaller domains. For the small domains to break with Sui is to Chu’s advantage. The adjutant is haughty. Let us make our troops appear weak in order to cause him to become overconfident.” [Tai]lü Jubi said, “As long as Ji Liang is alive, what good will this do?” Dou Bobi said, “It will serve our later plans. (He is saying that “although we have yet to implement my plan, when we raise it later they will be
destroyed in my plan.”) The adjutant will have his ruler’s favor.” The king made his troops appear to be in disarray and welcomed the Sui adjutant. The adjutant returned to his ruler and asked permission to pursue the Chu troops. The Prince of Sui was about to allow this when Ji Liang stopped him…. The Prince of Sui was frightened and cultivated good government. Chu did not dare to launch an attack.165

楚武王侵隨，使遠章求成焉（楚反使其大夫遠章先求成于隨），軍於瑕以待之，隨令使少師董成，鬬伯比言於楚子曰，吾不得志于漢東也，我則使然，我張吾三軍而被吾甲兵，以武臨之，彼則懼而恊以謀我，故難間也，漢東之國隨為大，隨張，必棄小國，小國難，楚之利也，少師侈，請羸師以張之，態率且比曰，季梁在，何益，鬬伯比曰，以為後圖（言今雖未行吾計後舉必墮吾計中），少師得其君，王毁軍而納少師，少師歸，請追楚師，隨侯將許之，季梁止之，隨侯懼而修政，楚不敢伐。166

Here the reader is given a short paragraph that references two named states, a river, a few unnamed states, and a cast of characters known sometimes by name, sometimes by title. All of this would have been quite basic knowledge for an examination candidate. The paragraph starts with no context but the state of Chu (楚) and its sovereign’s posthumous title: King Wu (楚武王), and the fact that he attacked the state of Sui (隨). The reader is expected to have enough

165 With the exception of the material underlined and in parentheses, which is my own, the English translation is from Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, trans., eds., Zuo Tradition, Zuozhuan 左傳, Commentary on the “Spring and Autumn Annals,” vol. 1, 95–99. The text is from the sixth year of Lord Han 桓公. These translators endeavor to format their translation following the chapter and section divisions of the Zuozhuan. I have formatted this according to Wu bei zhi’s abridgement of the excerpt. The ellipses in the English indicate where material from Durrant, Li, and Schaberg has been left out because Wu bei zhi did not include it. The replacement of Xionglü Jubi’s name with [Tai]lü Jubi is deliberate on my part. The character “Tai” (態) is used instead of “Xiong” (熊) in this name in Wu bei zhi. The person’s name is, in fact, Xionglü Jubi. Durrant, Li, and Schaberg refer to Wei Zhang instead of Yuan Zhang, but the character in Wu bei zhi is written as “Yuan” (遠), instead of Wei 遠. More on these discrepancies below.

166 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 3b–4a.
knowledge of history to know where and when the state of Chu existed and when King Wu was its sovereign. According to the Gregorian calendar that would be 740 BC – 690 BC. According to the calendar his readers knew, that would be measured by reign titles of rulers of the Zhou state. He was expected to know that Sui was also a state. The next clause demands that the reader recognize Yuan Zhang (遠章) as a name, even though “Yuan” is more often written with “Wei” (薳, which can also be pronounced “Yuan”). The first commentarial insertion gives slightly more context: Chu sent Yuan Zhang, a senior official there, to seek a treaty with the state of Sui. The reader is then expected to recognize Xia as the name of a place, and Shaoshi (少師) as a title, here translated as “adjutant” by Durrant et al.167 Dou Bobi (鬭伯比) is next in the cast of characters: readers would need to know or guess that he was a senior official for Chu. To decipher his advice, readers would need to know where the Han River was, and Chu and Sui’s relationship to it. Tailü Jubi (態率且比) is the next character with a line in this drama. Readers would probably know him as Xionglü Jubi 熊率且比, but Wu bei zhi misprints the character Xiong (熊) as Tai (態). Xionglü mentions Ji Liang (季梁), and the reader must know that Ji Liang is an official of Sui. Dou Bobi returns to the picture, and the commentary interprets the grammar of his brief statement. The Prince of Sui is frightened by whatever it is that Ji Liang said to him, and consequently, corrects his method of governance. This correction in governance means that Chu is afraid to invade. In order to comprehend the geography, cast of characters, and logic behind this passage, the reader must have passing familiarity with the story from its original text in the Zuozhuan or another historical text where it has been retold.

167 Charles O. Hucker translates Shaoshi as “Junior Preceptor,” a vague title used off and on from the Zhou period forward to honor a senior official. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, 415.
The reader is left to draw their own conclusions about what Ji Liang said to the Prince of Sui, why a correction in governing style in Sui could frighten Chu, and why Mao uses this example as a model of strategy when the conclusion is that Chu does not end up invading. The version of the same story in the Zuozhuan is significantly longer. In between the Prince of Sui’s near pursuit of the Chu army, his acquiescence to Ji Liang’s advice to refrain from doing so, and Chu’s subsequent decision to give up on their invasion, is a paragraph describing how Ji Liang convinced the Prince of Sui. Ji Liang argues to the Prince of Sui that Chu is deceiving them in appearing weak, hoping that Sui will attack. If the prince waits and ensures that the small states he protects are on his side, the situation will favor Sui. However, in order to achieve this, Ji Liang argues, the Prince of Sui needs to take care of his starving people instead of his own desires. The sacrifices he makes to the gods are insincere, Ji Liang argues, and provides proof. The prince is subsequently sufficiently convinced that he is not as virtuous a ruler as he thought, and is frightened of the consequences should Chu invade.\textsuperscript{168}

This paragraph is missing entirely from Wu bei zhi’s recounting of Chu’s attempt to trick Sui into aggression. Examining what is left out of Wu bei zhi, it is clear that readers were expected to be able to make the following leap of logic: Ji Liang was a morally upright adviser to the Prince of Sui. Chu, in this case, Xionglü Jubi, believed that Chu’s chances of success depended on Sui’s continued poor (morally deficient) governance. Dou Bobi believed that the Prince of Sui would continue his depraved governance so long as he trusted in the adjutant. Dou Bobi argued that Chu should fool the adjutant with the appearance of a weak army, and therefore

\textsuperscript{168} The full Chinese text of this passage from Zuozhuan, year six of Lord Huan, can be found from Ruan Yuan, Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi, juan 6, 47–48. A translation of that passage is made in full in Durrant, Li, and Schaberg, Zuo Tradition, 95–99.
fool the prince. The reader should be able to surmise that Chu’s strategy was not implemented because the Prince of Sui was sufficiently frightened by whatever Ji Liang said to him to (morally) rectify his methods of governing. Chu doesn’t invade, not because the strategy is at fault, but because Ji Liang happens to see through it and come between the adjutant and the prince. The section cut out of *Wu bei zhi* is the section that most readers would have been familiar with: the section where Ji Liang explains that a state can only remain safe by following the “Way” of Heaven, thereby drawing heaven to its side.

The principle that Heaven puts its support behind states with righteous rulers who think of the people would be obvious to Ming readers of *Wu bei zhi*, and it is this principle that enables the reader to make sense of the story without the long dialogue between Ji Liang and the Prince of Sui. In fact, let us assume that in the longer passage from the *Zuozhuan*, that is in fact the most critical point a reader might take from the passage, so routinely emphasized in the study of the *Zuozhuan* that readers would make this leap as easily as a North American university student might make the leap that a prime minister or president is (ideally) elected only with the support of voters. None of this is necessary to understand the value of Dou Bobi’s strategy—dupe a strong opponent into avidly pursuing an apparently weak enemy only to be defeated by masked strength. The preface to “Investigations” gives us one reason for the elision of the conversation with Ji Liang—if material is not technically military strategy, it is left out. In order to understand why the passage is cut, the reader must understand the likely content from his own previous reading. There must be a logical reason for Chu’s strategy to be considered worthy of inclusion, even though Chu refrained from invading Sui. In the *Zuo Commentary*, Ji Liang

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169 See above translation.
successfully persuades the Prince of Sui to rectify his ways, and therefore saves Sui. In *Wu bei zhi*, this becomes an example of excellent strategy on Chu’s part that happens to not be implemented for non-military, implied reasons. Similar examples of elision and revision are evident in other sections of “Investigations.”

Not all examples like this are taken from their earliest version. As mentioned above, quotations often resemble the shortened version in a reading primer, unofficial history, or even an abridged version of an unofficial history intended as a tool for study. The reader was expected to be able to identify the story, its origin text, and other texts where it might have been repeated. In “Investigations,” the reader’s assumption is that the words are not Mao’s own unless he specifies otherwise. We also can’t assume the commentary is Mao’s own. The commentary could have come from any number of common commentaries. For example, the two comments underlined and enclosed in parentheses in the passage above are quoted from a famous commentary on the *Zuozhuan*. Both are from a commentary by Lin Yaosou 林堯叟, a Song-dynasty commentator. This commentary was fairly widely distributed and in use by Mao’s contemporaries. Wang Daokun 王道焜 published it along with a commentary by Du Yu 杜預 (active 265–420 AD) in the Tianqi period (天啟, 1620–1627), the same period during which *Wu bei zhi* was published.¹⁷⁰ In both “Critiques” and “Investigations,” in-line commentaries on those same texts are not immediately identifiable, though it is fairly clear they are not Mao’s

own. Readers are expected to have a fairly good idea where they might be able to find the original text and similar commentaries. Some of the histories quoted might even be partially memorized. In fact, it appears that unless text is prefaced by the words “Master Mao says” (Maozi yue 茅子曰) or is outside the margins of the page, the compiler does not claim authorship of any of the text in *Wu bei zhi*, commentarial or otherwise.

This level of analysis could be applied to each of the passages quoted in “Investigations.” Together, “Investigations” and “Critiques” show us that citation practices in *Wu bei zhi* are largely dependent on whether or a not a reader could reliably be expected to have already accessed a story or text independently because of the demands of one exam or another. In “Critiques,” the prefatory material neglects to explain the production history or attribute authorship of the six pre-Qin texts at its foundation. Readers are expected to be able to position these texts within a historical discourse with minimal assistance. In “Investigations,” we see Mao gloss over citation almost entirely, saying only that his material is drawn from the official and unofficial histories—books that, as discussed above, readers preparing for the civil examinations would have required little to no direction to identify as the sources of the historical anecdotes  

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171 For example, the in-line commentaries in the section on *Sunzi bingfa* do not bear resemblance to widely circulated commentaries on the *Seven Military Classics*, such as that by Liu Yin 劉寅 (14th or 15th c.) and Zhao Benxue, the latter, an author/editor whose work quoted extensively in “Systems of Troop Formations and Training.” Liu Yin is a known Ming dynasty author, and there is an extant Chenghua 成化 reign period (1464–1487) edition of one of his books. He likely lived and worked in the 15th century. SKDCD, 1616. For Zhao Benxue compare: Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 1, 3a–4a; Liu Yin, *Wujing zhijie*, in *Zhongguo zixue mingzhu jicheng*, volume 73, *Sun Wu zi zhijie juan zhi shang* 孫武子直解卷之上 [First volume of *Sun Wu zi zhijie*], 1a–2a; and Zhao Benxue, *Sunzi shu jiaojie yinlei*, in *Zhongguo zixue mingzhu jicheng*, volume 75, *Sunzi shu juan shang* 孫子書卷上 [First volume of *Sunzi shu*], 1a–4a.
recorded in this section. On our bell curve, these texts also sit near the y axis and the core of the library of information.

Mao’s introductions to these sections and the organization of information in each draw our attention not to the problem of claims of authorship or attribution, but to the basic landscape of military theory, philosophy, strategy and history. In these sections, the histories of these texts were familiar enough that attribution of authorship was mostly unnecessary (as in “Critiques”), or not meaningful to the information’s position in a structure of military knowledge (“Investigations”). Acknowledging the authors of the sundry histories quoted in “Investigations,” already well known to readers, would have done nothing to further verify the military prowess of Dou Bobi in the example above. The veracity of the histories quoted was not in question—it was the strategic prowess of Dou Bobi that mattered. In later sections more concerned with contemporary techniques and technologies, the experience of the author of a cited text became much more important.

Technical knowledge required a different corpus of texts less familiar to a literati reader and therefore required different citation practices. In the next major sections of *Wu bei zhi*, “Systems of Troop Formations and Training” (*Zhen lian zhi* 阵練制, hereafter “Systems”), and “Military Supplies and Transport” (*Junzi sheng* 軍資乘, hereafter, “Resources), we will see Mao increasingly rely on Ming authors and commentators, especially those with recent military achievements. These texts are referred to by the author or compiler’s name, drawing attention to their provenance. The authors he cites in “Systems” and “Resources,” like the historical figure Dou Bobi, validate the value of the information cited by way of their historical successes.

Where *Wu bei zhi* provides more information regarding the sources it draws from, we can also take this as a sign of lowered expectations that a reader will have read (or even partially
memorized) the source text. The texts most explicitly cited in *Wu bei zhi* belong to neither the core nor the periphery of the library of information on military studies, and are recognizable enough that drawing attention to the name of the text or author has meaning for the reader, perhaps conveying increased reliability of the information. In the last major section of the text, “Record of Divination and Geography,” when the sources of the information discussed become more obscure, Mao’s own voice becomes more prominent as he claims more passages explicitly as his own, and does not bother citing the names of obscure texts and authors that would have no meaning for the reader. The purpose of citing a passage in this kind of literature was to situate it within a knowledge hierarchy, and had very little to do with claiming or disavowing credit for the ideas contained therein.

2.4.3 Systems of Troop Formations and Training (1): Formations (*Zhen* 陣)

“Systems of Troop Formation and Training” contains techniques for arranging bodies in space. In “Systems,” the first sub-section (*juan* 52–67) is devoted to troop formations (*zhen* 陣). In the first section, “Formations,” material is organized chronologically by purported original creator or source, but, if applicable, a later interpreter is acknowledged. Chronology of origin remains paramount in organizing these techniques, but citation of those who executed them across history gains importance. In these chapters, images of each technique take structural priority over textual explanations, which follow images and their titles. Although many techniques depicted here date to early imperial China, these chapters are heavily reliant on Ming-dynasty sources. Even information drawn from texts compiled much earlier than the Ming is often pulled from a Ming edition of the text or military compendium, or relies on the interpretation of a Ming strategist and the organization and citation practices of other compendia.
Beyond Ming editions of earlier texts, in “Systems,” we begin to see citations of Ming authors in their own right. Mao performs his own reading experience and guides readers through this terrain, expecting less familiarity with titles. However, by citing authors with reputations for military experience and efficacy, he situates the information and titles within the context of recent Ming history. It is through the authors’ deeds that these texts claim credibility. By citing their interpretations of old formations, Mao also shows what was new to the Ming. Like modern citations, Mao’s citations serve to build his credibility. However, the failure to name the author of a textual excerpt does not, as a modern scholar might assume, point to Mao claiming responsibility for the excerpt or even its commentary. Rather, it points to the fact that it was unnecessary to disavow responsibility for the words: readers expected them to be borrowed. The more widely read the series of texts quoted, the more unnecessary a specific reference became, the more entrenched and foundational that text was to a shared repertoire of texts. Names of Ming authors were used for their authority as historical actors and interpreters, not to credit the act of writing characters or images on a page.

In the preface to “Formations,” Mao claims that teachings about troop formations have been thoroughly muddled across the years, much like the Confucian classics were muddled by apocrypha “after the Qin fires.” Mao Yuanyi claims that he will untangle those teachings, categorizing excerpts from teachings on troop formation according to those with connections to the heavens (modeled after constellations, for example), those attributed to sages, and then

172 “The Qin fires” is a reference to Qin Shi Huangdi’s attempt to burn Confucian books and massacre scholars. This extremely recognizable “orthodox” understanding of the history of the classics would have been immediately understandable to readers immersed in this tradition. See Bodde, “The State and Empire of Ch'in,” 69–72.
continue listing valuable formations in chronological order. The introduction describes Mao’s exerception and structural choices as follows:

Li Weigong has a saying: ‘Storing it away is how it is destroyed.’ Moreover, teachers kept their teachings extremely secret at the time, and did not know that the transmitters of the teachings would scatter them and let them lie fallow. They especially suffered from profusion. I therefore categorized their excerpts, refreshed what had been deleted, and lay out what had been attacked in order to broaden scholars’ view of them. I begin with troop formations inspired by the heavens, second are those attributed to the sages, then I continue according to chronology, and finish with miscellaneous experts.

李衛公有言，存之乃所以廢之也。況說者方以其學甚秘，不知流傳者紛以穢，特患其多耳，吾故譜而存之，鮮所刪剷，陳所掊擊，以廣學者之目焉，先以天，次以神，繼以時，終以雜家。173

The preface thus outlines the thematic structure of “Formations,” but does not describe the sources Mao draws on to fill in this section. To describe the scope and relative importance of those sources, one must first understand how the images and text describing troop formations are laid out in each sub-section (the heavens, the sages, chronologically organized other examples, and miscellaneous).

In the chapters devoted to the transmission of embodied skills and technologies, like “Formations,” we find these ideas and their methods of execution “encoded” in what Francesca Bray calls “technical images” (tu 圖), which functioned as “templates for action.”174 Technical images are particularly important in “Formations.” Each chapter within “Formations” has its own

173 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 52, 2b–3a.
174 Bray gives the following definition of tu in an edited volume devoted to the study of images and technical knowledge: “a specialist term denoting only those graphic images or layouts which encoded technical knowledge: tu were templates for action.” Mao’s use of tu fits this definition. More discussion below. Bray, “Introduction: The Powers of Tu,” 1–2.
table of contents. Each item in the tables of contents refers to a technical image contained in the chapter. The technical images are generally followed by passages explaining their meaning. Both image and text are borrowed from older, widely distributed texts. It is the images that structure each chapter: images are organized chronologically according to their purported origin and followed by text that elaborates on their meaning. It is impossible to tell from whence exactly Wu bei zhi borrows its images, but it is clear that they are not new, but rather shared widely among various editions of Ming and earlier military texts. In fact, images and texts are often taken from other source texts in combination with one another. Images were part and parcel of the library of information Wu bei zhi embodies, and tied to particular excerpts of texts. The order of images and text could be reordered, remixed, and edited, but they were unlikely to be detached from one another.

As much as citation practices for texts in Wu bei zhi function to situate technical knowledge within a historical narrative,175 images, though cited less effectively, situated technical knowledge in the material world. Such images were used to depict things that demanded material embodiment, or as Bray puts it, “spatial encoding.”176 Technical images helped the reader imagine how to enact knowledge in the physical world, or how to put objects to use in the physical world.177

175 As in Siebert, “Making Technology History,” 276.
176 Ibid., 2.
177 In Peter Golas’ analysis of technical images in China in Picturing Technology, he often laments the stagnated development of techniques of representing technology in China after the “Golden Age” of the Song and Yuan dynasties. Golas implicitly, if not explicitly, adheres to a somewhat teleological understanding of technology and its representation, in which the unstated question of “Why is China not like Europe?” always lurks in the background. See for, example, his title to Chapter Three: “Song and Yuan: A Golden Age,” (pp. 37–86), and language therein such as “the cause of improved technological illustration was dealt an especially serious blow”
This is important to keep in mind when we think of how images were cited. It was not the physical text, published by a specific publisher, carved by a specific carver, or even first composed by a specific person that Mao is citing—but rather he is citing an idea and its execution, both oft repeated in any number of specialist military texts belonging to a common mental repertoire of texts or “library.” Some of the technical images are described as later executions of particular formations designed by earlier experts, for example, Pei Xu’s 裴緒 (of the Three Kingdoms period, 220–280 AD) execution of Sun Wu’s “Square Formation Image.”178 The chronology of the technical images is determined by the supposed origin (Sun Wu) not by the person who executed them (Pei Xu). Attribution for the execution of the idea represented by the image is given to the later interpreter. Images were generally traced to people, rather than books. A diagram of a Ming interpretation of a pre-Qin idea would be cited as such, but a Ming diagram of a Three Kingdoms idea would be cited according to the Three Kingdoms period interpreter. The specificity of attribution in the images and text of these chapters becomes important when asking to what degree Mao Yuanyi relied on later interpreters, commentators, and compilers to gather relevant images and text.

Like diagrams of troop formations, in “Formations,” textual explanations of those diagrams and their in-line commentaries are usually borrowed from Ming compendia, but attributed to the historical figure with whom they originated. For example, three technical images purportedly originally from Huangdi woqi jing 黃帝握奇經 (The Yellow Emperor’s classic (59), which implies a universal teleology of progress. I want to steer us away from concern regarding the “realism” of technical images (on realism, see Golas, Chapter 2, “Han to Tang: Realism on the Rise,” 13–35), and focus on their function in a text.

178 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 54, 1b, 15b.
embracing the strange)\textsuperscript{179} are included in the first chapter of “Troop Formations.” The images and accompanying text, including its commentaries and sub-commentaries, can be found in a number of other similar texts often quoted in *Wu bei zhi*. The first passage of text and commentary starts with a quotation from *Huangdi woqi jing*, then includes several lines of commentary summarizing previous commentaries on the quotation, which state:

There is a later edition of the *Classic Embracing the Strange* in which the notations of Fan Li, Yue Yi, Han Xin, and others are mutually mixed. Fan Li and Yue Yi’s are in the style of the ancients’ commentarial notes, binding its [the texts’] meaning into ancillary commentaries in order to include them systematically before the classic’s own text. At the time of Han Xin and Zhang Liang [of the early Western Han], the order was first military strategy, then after that, explanations of Fan and Yue’s ancillary commentaries, as though there was a larger commentary and a smaller commentary. Later they were mistaken as one, and the classic and the commentary were no longer distinguished, the meaning of the words were no longer clear. The followers of Gong [Sunhong] added characters in difficult places to understand in order to clarify. Therefore, the mess and disorder got even more extreme. Today, they have been differentiated and broken up as it says below….The greater ancillary commentary is the words of Fan Li and Yue Yi. The small notes below the ancillary commentary are the words of Han [Xin], and the small notes outside the circles are the words that are characters added to clarify by Gong Sunhong.

後世握法經一本，有范蠡樂毅韓信等註相雜，蓋范蠡樂毅乃古人傳註之法，約其義為傳，以係於經文之前，至韓信張良，次序兵法，又釋范樂之傳，猶大小傳也，後錯而爲一，經傳不分，辭義不明，公徒于難通之處，增字發明，則雜亂愈甚矣，今別而分折之如左云….大傳范蠡樂毅之文，傳下小註，韓[信]之文，圈外小註，即公孫弘增字發明之文也。\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{179} This is a famous text attributed to Feng Hou 風后, a minister of the legendary Yellow Emperor, and supposedly annotated by Gong Sunhong 公孫弘 during the Han dynasty. *SKDCD* argues that none of this is reliable, and it was probably put together since the Tang and elaborates on the Eight Formations methods from works attributed to Zhuge Liang of the Three Kingdoms period. *SKDCD*, 1618–1619.

\textsuperscript{180} Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 52, 18b.
While the commentators this passage refers to are of the Spring and Autumn and Western Han periods, this commentary and passages it accompanies are quoted from other Ming-dynasty, encyclopedia-style military compendia. The same images, text, and commentary appear in *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao* (Re-carved extended summary of essentials in the Military Classics, preaced 1557), edited by Zhao Benxue and Yu Dayou (1503–1579). The text and commentary appear alone in Tang Shunzhi’s *Wu bian* (Arrangement of military writings), and the main text is similar to a passage that appears in the Song Dynasty *Wujing zongyao* (Summary of essentials in the Military Classics). Presumably, if anything at all about this page is new to *Wu bei zhi*, it is the printed marginal comment above the passage, which reads: “This book’s mistakes are laid out fully. Differentiating them [the commentaries] like this can be arrived at via logic.” The fact that these images, their titles, and commentaries are all borrowed from other texts tells us that such editorial practices were common across encyclopedic collections of specialist texts from the late Ming.

The images and textual excerpts in “Formations” appear in earlier texts such as *Wujing zongyao*, and *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao*. The titles of the images and the “records” (ji) are borrowed from *Wujing zongyao* and *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao*.

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182 Zeng Gongliang (999–1078) and Ding Du (990–1053), *Wujing zongyao qianji*, juan 8, 2a–2b.

183 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 52, 18b. 「此書訛列至矣，如此分由方得。」

184 In addition to *Wujing zongyao* and *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao*, see Zhuang Yinghui, *Jingwu yaolüe* 經武要略, dated between 1628-1644, in SKJH, volume 31.
“debates” (bian 辯), and “explanations” (shuo 說) that accompany them give clues to the (multiple) places from which Wu bei zhi draws them. For example, Chapter 60 contains ten technical images of troop formations attributed to Li Jing 李靖 (570–649), whom we have already encountered as Li Weigong, or Duke Li of Wei of Tang Taizong Li Weigong wen da. Wu bei zhi orders the images in the following way:

Diagram of Li Jing Connecting the Corners with Curves Face to Face Making Eight Columns of Troops into Six
李靖隅落鈎連曲折相對八陣爲六圖

Diagram of Li Jing Making Six Columns of Zhuge Liang’s Eight, the Old Method
李靖以諸葛亮八陣爲六舊法圖

Diagram of Li Jing Changing the Squares Drawn Outside the Circle of the Inside Ring into the Six Flower Formation
李靖內環之圓外畫之方變爲六花陣圖

Diagram Laying out Li Jing’s Six Flower Seven Armies’ Chariots, Foot Soldiers and Cavalry Formation (Four images combined with explanations)
李靖六花七軍車徒騎布列陣圖（四圖共說）

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Opening into Squares for Drills and Inspection
李靖六花開方教閱圖

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Square Formation
李靖六花方陣圖

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Circle Formation
李靖六花圓陣圖

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Curved Formation
李靖六花曲陣圖

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Straight Line Formation
李靖六花直陣圖

Diagram of Li Jing’s Six Flower Sharp Formation (Six images combined with explanations, ten images with an essay)
李靖六花銳陣圖（六圖共說 十圖共記）

185 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 60, 1a–1b.
As the parts of the quotation in parentheses explain, after the first four images, *Wu bei zhi* includes an explanation of the images from *Li Weigong wen dui*. After the next six images, *Wu bei zhi* includes another excerpt from the same, then follows it with “Essay on Li Jing’s Six Flower Formation.” Both the images and text have a number of potential sources. *Wu bei zhi* could potentially be quoting directly from *Li Weigong wen dui*, but is more likely quoting from similarly structured contemporary texts that have already broken down this information in the same way. The Song-dynasty *Wujing zongyao* does not contain a section remixed quite like this, though it does contain a long passage describing the troop formation methods of Li Jing.187 *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao* does contain such a remix. Zhao Benxue and Yu Dayou mix the same text and images, with a few additions, in the following order: “Essay on Li Jing’s Six Flower Formation,” then the four images with which *Wu bei zhi* begins the section, then a long quotation from the original *Wujing zongyao* (not included in *Wu bei zhi*), then the same six images *Wu bei zhi* includes, then the passage with which *Wu bei zhi* ends the section, then, lastly, a summary of an incident in Kaiyuan period (713–741).188 The last appears to be excerpted and compiled from various histories. For example, the entirety of what is included in *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao* appears in *Wenxian tongkao*, although it is clear bits of the full story in that text have been left out of the quotation in *Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao*.189 The order of the material in *Wu bei zhi* and *Chongkan xu Wujingzongyao* are basically reversed. *Wu bei zhi* was written long after the latter (1621 vs. 1557).

186 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 60, 1a–9a.
187 WJZY, juan 8, 3a–4b.
So far, analysis of “Formations” has shown that even for old ideas *Wu bei zhi* reorganized images and text widely available in Ming editions of military texts. Many of these sources had already reorganized that information for broader consumption, and that information continued to be reorganized by others after the publication of *Wu bei zhi*. Since the content of such texts is often similar, what is unique to each text is its organization, and in the case of *Wu bei zhi*, its printed marginal comments. In other words, what makes *Wu bei zhi* unique is its author’s performance as a self-declared reader guiding other readers through material on “Formations,” both old and new. This guidance becomes even more important as Mao moves on to situate information from late sixteenth-century military manuals against this background of Ming interpreters of old techniques.

“Formations” is also unique in that it expands the shared library of information to include Ming creators of troop formations who were contemporaries of Mao’s father and grandfather. Since the technical images in the chapters of this section are listed in chronological order, the last technical images list interpretations of standard troop formations from only the generation or two before Mao Yuanyi. With the increased specificity of information in this section comes an increased specificity in who is credited with a specific interpretation of a specific formation. In “Formations,” it becomes evident that *Wu bei zhi* not only relies heavily on interpretations of Ming authors, but also cites them more specifically. Those authors are not expected to be recognized immediately based upon either the image or text presented. They are named explicitly and cited at great length. This newer material has accumulated less commentary than older materials, and these authors are allowed to speak for themselves. Table 1 shows a rough breakdown of how many images and textual excerpts are explicitly attributed to a particular person or book.
A full 61 images in “Formations” are explicitly attributed to a named Ming strategist. 123 images are attributed to pre-Ming strategists or explicitly name pre-Ming texts as inspiration. These images are arranged in chronological order by originator, not interpreter. Ming strategists’ interpretations of earlier formations are used extensively in chapters outlining earlier strategists’ ideas (Chapters 52–63), not just the chapters explicitly addressing formations newly developed by Ming strategists (Chapters 64–66). 37 excerpts explaining images across all chapters are attributed to Ming strategists by name. Only 42 excerpts across the first 11 chapters in the section cite earlier texts explicitly by title. These 42 usually use the name of a familiar book, not the name of its author. Over 94 excerpts have no explicit attribution. Many, if not most, of these, can be traced back to multiple sources. Importantly, they can be found in Ming editions, commentaries, or expansions on earlier texts. Zhao Benxue’s Chongkan xu Wujing zongyao, discussed above, is often used in this way. Some of these unattributed excerpts are so because they can be traced back to multiple texts, for example, both Zhao Benxue and Tang Shunzhi’s Wu bian, and sometimes also Wujing zongyao.

What stands out from these numbers is the extent to which Ming strategists are quoted in such a way that they give voice to their own words. In Chapters 64 and 65, in particular, when Zhao Benxue, Yu Dayou, and Qi Jiguang’s 魁兩光 (1528–1587) unique troop formations are introduced (as opposed to their interpretations of earlier strategists’ formations), the explanations that follow are attributed to the people themselves with a simple “Zhao Benxue said” (Zhao Benxue yue 趙本學曰) or “Yu Dayou said” (Yu Dayou yue 俞大猷曰). Earlier explanations of others’ formations might include the author’s name, but are introduced by the title of the essay: “Zhao Benxue’s Discussion of Zhang Ye’s Interpretation of Li Jing’s Six Flower Formation”
The Ming authors speak for themselves directly, rather than through commentators. Earlier chapters see a great deal of reliance on Ming commentators explaining formations, or commentaries from earlier texts widely reproduced in Ming military books. It is plausible that *Wu bei zhi* relies extensively on Ming editions of books compiled in the Song dynasty that during the Ming still formed the basic foundation of an education in literate military studies. These would include the *Seven Military Classics* and books such as *Wujing zongyao*. *Wu bei zhi* also clearly relies on Ming military texts that expressed new ideas of their authors. In fact, the entire section on troop formations is structured around a foundation of formations drawn from earlier texts, all interspersed with Ming interpretations of those earlier formations, which prepares the reader to appreciate what is different about the later chapters that describe troop formations developed by Ming strategists themselves. For troop formations with earlier origins, most of the burden is put on the reader to identify their provenance; for later formations, a larger burden is put on the compiler.

Chronological priority, as in previous chapters, serves as a framework through which a hierarchy of information is established, however, it is also this hierarchy that makes visible what is new, innovative, and effective. This hierarchy makes the value of the new legible to readers for whom resort to older classics is an accepted approach to the establishment of truth. “Formations,” and most other sections of *Wu bei zhi*, positions the compiler of *Wu bei zhi*, Mao Yuanyi, as a reader guiding others through his own process. By valuing heaven above ancient sages above exceptional humans as sources of truth, and by sticking to chronological order to

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190 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 61, 3b.
structure the hierarchy of information, *Wu bei zhi* makes the value of certain pieces of information legible to other readers. Value, here, is measured by the efficacy in practice of a given strategy or idea when enacted in a given situation, hence why the latest and most experienced Ming, literate commanders are cited here against a backdrop of familiar texts.

The hierarchy of information Mao has built for his readers so far first moves over strategies, then historical examples of the value of such strategies, then troop formations, which teach the reader to arrange bodies into formations that can enact those strategies. The arrangement of information in chronological order of production does not imply that the earlier information is more important, more effective, *per se*, but that it is more basic to understanding advanced skills of application. *Wu bei zhi* attributes new information to specific people and new texts against a background of familiar texts, familiar commentarial formats, and familiar names. This familiar background is decorated with layers of new, Ming commentary and developments. All this is interrupted only by Mao’s own marginal commentary, giving texture to the terrain of the library through which he wanders, occasionally taking detours to other books to verify his ability to quote, organize, and prioritize information.

### 2.4.4 Systems of Troop Formations and Training (2): Training (*Lian* 錘)

The chapters that follow the discussion of troop formations use similar principles to organize their materials. They also include numerous technical graphics. However, where the chapters on troop formations (Chapters 52–67) form a coherent whole with different authors speaking to the same topic, the following sections are more chopped up. For example, although “Troop Formations” is tied together with “Training” as a single section: “Systems of Troop Formations and Training,” “Training” is structured in a different way and relies on different
sources, in part because it describes a number of extraordinarily specific processes to build an army and then train it. This is common to the sections thereafter. The corpus of texts cited in “Training,” the organization of that material in the order in which to implement or learn it, and the ways in which the source texts are referenced display increasing trust in authorities who possessed both material knowledge of technologies and techniques and classical literacy.

The section on training an army takes up Chapters 68 to 92, and contains five subsections: “Selecting Soldiers” (xuanshi 選士), “Organizing Divisions” (bianwu 編伍), “Promulgating Rules and Regulations” (xuanling 懸令), “Teaching Orders” (jiaoqi 教旗), and “Teaching Skills” (jiaoyi 教藝). While the basic rules described for ordering information in “Formations” still apply, each of these sections is substantially smaller than the whole of the category regarding troop formations, and each relies on a particular subset of sources. I will first relate Mao’s logic of the organization for the five subsections in “Training,” then briefly describe the sources employed in each of the sub-subsections and how they are cited, and, finally, explain their implications for Mao’s understanding of literati expertise in techniques and technologies of war.

Mao’s logic for organizing the section on “Training” is discussed in his preface to the section, which argues that each skill listed is a prerequisite for the effective use of the next. Each of the five subsections is necessary for a commander to either implement or teach his soldiers before engaging the next. Mao writes:

Soldiers who are not properly selected, cannot be trained….The key is in selecting those fit for infantry, cavalry, chariot, and naval service and using them appropriately. Because the four are not used at the same time, it is also necessary to divide them according to

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their talents and give them weapons. The most lowly drafted soldiers in ancient times were the “blue kerchief drafted.” Set up regulations and weigh out their food, then, in the midst of regular gatherings, reward and punish with portions, increasing or decreasing them accordingly. Selection [of soldiers] is thereby that by which practice is carried out. After this, carry out the method of organizing divisions and proclaim rules and regulations, causing their hearts to rise with gall, and daily approach our [state of being able to] practice without waking. After this, teach them the rhythms of advancing and retreating, making their eyes train with the banners and flags, and their ears with the sounds of gongs and drums. When we meet the unfamiliar systems of the enemies, [there might be] a hundred adaptations with a hundred appearances, yet that which their ears and eyes practiced will be as one. This can be considered a well trained army. This being so, one cannot obtain victory by way of a conflicted army. In the Tang system, the [military] skills are taught in eight days. Two days for teaching the flags is most appropriate. Of the skills, there are those that are practiced concurrently, such as bows, cross bows, hand cannons, sabers, and staffs. There are those that are practiced separately, such as halberds, spears, and large cannons. Firearms are another matter. Anything else is explained in detail and laid out in images. Thus, “Training” is divided into five levels: selecting soldiers, binding in groups, proclaiming commands, the teaching of orders, and the teaching of skills. Detailing each is a table of contents.

夫士不選,則不可練也。。。要在選步騎車水之宜而用之,即四者不兼用,亦必分材而授之器,最下者給使令,古所謂蒼頭厮養也,定則而等其食,則常廩之中,賞罰寓焉,從而損益之,選即所以練也,然後行束伍之法,頒禁令之條,使其心興膽,日就我之練而不覺,然後教以進退之節,使目練於旌旗,耳練於金鼓,我臨敵制奇,百變百出,而其耳目之所習者如一,此可以稱節制之師矣,然不可以捍格取捷也,故唐之制,以八日教藝,二日教旗最為得中,藝有兼習者,如弓弩手砲刀棍之類是也,有分習者,如戈戟刀矛大砲之類是也,火器別有見,其它則詳說而圖列之,故練凡五等,曰選士,曰編伍,曰懸令,曰教旗,曰教藝,其詳各有目。 192

Mao argues that training is imperative, but without first selecting soldiers, assigning them tasks, and grouping them, it is impossible to train those soldiers to respond “as one” to signals from flags and drums. Once soldiers have been trained to respond as a unit, they can then spend their time training with various kinds of weaponry according to the group they’ve been assigned. The preface thus outlines how each of the five subsections in “Training” must follow one upon the other.

192 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 68, 1a–2a.
Each of the five subsections of “Training” draws on different kinds of sources to compile these very particular kinds of knowledge. The first subsection, “Selecting Soldiers,” quotes only three sources: *Jixiao xinshu* 紀效新書 (New book on records of efficiency, 1560, by Qi Jiguang), *Xingjun xuzhi* 行軍須知 (Necessary knowledge for administering an army), and *Shilü tigang* 師律提綱 (Outline of army regulations). The second subsection, “Organizing Divisions” (Chapters 69–70), relies heavily on Ming strategists such as Qi Jiguang and a few Song texts. Textual excerpts are organized by topic, each topic only a few pages long, and within each topic, chronological order again applies. The third subsection, “Promulgating Rules” (Chapters 71–75), has a similar textual pedigree, but also draws on information held in *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 (Collected statutes of the Great Ming).

The fourth subsection, “Teaching Orders” (Chapters 76-83), devotes several chapters to training soldiers to follow orders. Material is divided according to dynasty (Tang to Ming), and therefore draws on a more complicated series of sources than the previous three subsections. In the preface to “Teaching Orders,” Mao explains how he has ordered the information:

Master Mao said: “Teaching orders” refers to methods of regular drilling….Beginning in the Tang and after, they can be investigated chapter by chapter. There are state systems, and the methods of particular generals. I have laid them [the two categories] out together according to chronology. If it is part of our current dynasty’s state system, then it is detailed in the middle of the generals’ methods. If it is ritual writings [about] large scale inspections, then I did not include it under “Training.”

193 *SKDCD*, 1625.

194 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 68, 3a–9a.

“Teaching Orders” relies on sources used in “Investigations” and “Formations” to describe the rules regarding official drilling practices of states. For example Chapter 76, on the Tang, includes passages that appear in a number of books seen used in “Investigations.” Many passages appear in more than one of the following (albeit the wording used in Wu bei zhi might match one of them more closely): Tongdian 通典 (Comprehensive statutes, 801), Jiu Tangshu 舊唐書 (Old book of Tang) Xin Tangshu 新唐書 (New book of Tang), and Taihai yinjing. Chapters 77–78, on the Song, rely heavily on Wujing zongyao. Chapters 79–83 describe methods by particular generals of the Ming dynasty, titled in the format “Method of so-and-so of this dynasty” (Benchao [NAME] fa, 本朝[NAME]法). The material is drawn exclusively from the works of Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou, and Wang Minghe 王鳴鶴 (w.j.s. 1586). The reliance on contemporary sources in these five chapters points to a conviction that both historical success in the field and competence with military sources are criteria for status as an expert worthy of citation.

Qi, Yu, and Wang all possessed both experiential and textual expertise. Wang Minghe held a great number of field offices between 1589 and 1609, and obtained his metropolitan degree in the military examinations in 1586.197 Mao writes of his reason for including Wang’s work at the end of this section: “This theory makes the annotations of the various masters

196 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 76, 1a–1b.
abundantly clear, therefore I record them.”

Qi Jiguang was one of the best known generals of the mid Ming dynasty, famed for his innovative approaches to troop recruitment, organization and strategy in fighting pirates in the Southeast and his work in the Northeast against the Mongols in the sixteenth century. Yu Dayou was well known for his successful participation in the campaigns against the pirates of the Southeast. Yu and others were also known for their expertise in martial arts.

After “Teaching Orders,” the fifth section of “Training,” titled “Teaching Skills” (Chapters 84–92), includes further sub-subsections divided according to the weapons used. Each sub-subsection includes textual excerpts arranged in chronological order of perceived composition. Mao intersperses various Ming authors so that training takes place in the order he feels appropriate, which he explains in Chapter 84:

Master Mao said: Those arts that can [still] truly be practiced today, for long-range weapons there are two kinds, called recurve bows and crossbows. As for short-range weapons, there are six kinds, called double-edged swords, single-edged swords, small firearms, shielded spear, shields, multipronged spears, and staffs. Yet staffs, by which you train with the hands and feet, are the root of short-range weapons. Fist-fighting was the way the ancients fought by hand. Even though none are used [now], yet they still can be used to train the body. Thus, I record them together here, and finish with comparing methods.

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198 『此說作諸家註疏甚明切故錄之。』Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 83, 21b.

199 See their biographies in the *Mingshi*. Zhang Tingyu, *Mingshi*, “Liezhuan” 列傳 [Biographies], *juan* 212, 5601–5608 (Yu Dayou), and 5610–5617 (Qi Jiguang). It should be noted that Mao Kun, Mao Yuanyi’s grandfather, was also involved in fighting pirates on the Southeast coast in the sixteenth century. This group’s social network will be explored with Mao’s own in the next chapter. See Fang and Glahn, “Mao K’un,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1042–1047.
This organizational choice is an editorial act meant to guide readers in the order in which to learn to execute physical skills.

As far as what texts are drawn on to complete “Teaching Skills,” we see familiar texts already mentioned in other sections, and specialist texts on weaponry from the Ming, such as Yu Dayou’s Jian jing 剣經 (Classic of Swords). Chapter 84 begins with material from Wujing zongyao and Huqian jing, and continues with material from a host of other sources (mostly Ming and Yuan) that Mao considers akin to commentaries on the first two. Chapters 87, 91, and 92 rely heavily on books by Yu Dayou and Qi Jiguang. Most are texts cited previously by Mao, and at one point or another in Wu bei zhi attributed to those authors. Chapter 86 is of interest in that its preface identifies the Tang dynasty (618–907) as the most recent time when a dynasty had a significant force of swordsmen using swords. Since then, Mao claims, the art of using swords was lost, but preserved in Korea and Japan. The second half of the chapter returns to the work of Qi Jiguang on sabers. In these chapters, we see heavy reliance on texts composed by renowned, experienced commanders.

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200 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 84, 1a–b.
201 See citation of Jian jing 剣經 [Classic of swords], by Yu Dayou, in Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 84, 22a. On Jian jing, see Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, “Yiwen zhi” 藝文志 [Bibliographical treatise], juan 98, 2437.
202 『猶經之有傳也。』 See Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 84, 4b.
203 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 86, 1a–1b.
204 Ibid., 15b–22b.
Chapters 85, 88, 89, and 90 are of great interest for their use of one particular source by Cheng Zongyou 程宗猷 (ca. 1623), which Mao values explicitly as a record of an individual’s personal experience with techniques and technologies.\footnote{Cheng Zongyou is mentioned briefly in the Ming shi lu, Xizong 熹宗, \textit{juan} 30, 1543–1544.} Mao’s introductory preface to chapter 85 gives an example of his own and Cheng’s use of material objects to work out the design of older crossbows and, in Cheng’s case, improve upon it. The preface reads as follows:

A while back, I was in Chang’ an and obtained an old bronze crossbow mechanism, kept it, and stored it away. Cheng Zongyou of Haiyang obtained one similar to mine first, and matched up its mechanism. Moreover, he used his own understanding to make [it into] a new style, and exhaustively examined its theory. Working backwards from the size of the mechanism, he figured out that it belongs to an old so-called “open-at-the-waist crossbow”… Today, with his method, those who can lift 300 jin can conquer it by exerting force. Its basic qualities preserved in the weapon, Cheng details its method of use in this, and then also details its mechanism therein. I record his original words in the hope that they won’t be forgotten.’

Mao clearly privileges the expertise of the author who successfully reconstructed a mechanism in practice rather than his own. Interestingly, instead of re-punctuating Cheng’s work, reorganized, yet quoted extensively in Chapters 85, 88, 89, and 90, Mao also makes a printed note in the margins that the punctuation (in Chapter 90 at least) is not his own, but Cheng’s. This marginal statement is of extraordinary importance here in that it clearly is an instance where Mao, as a compiler, felt it necessary to point out when an act of reading was not his own. He writes: “In this chapter, the reading marks entirely follow Mr. Cheng’s original edition. Its guiding

\footnote{Mao Yuanyi, \textit{Wu bei zhi}, \textit{juan} 85, 1a–1b.}
principles are appended at the end."²⁰⁷ Here, Cheng’s expertise is textual, but founded in material experience.

In the chapters of “Teaching Skills,” and indeed in all five subsections of “Training,” we see increasing trust put in knowledge of function based on the physical investigation of material technologies and concern for the appropriate order of reading about physical techniques and their practice. Combined with the insistence on citing Ming authorities on the training of soldiers who have records of success in the field (Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou) and authorities with a reputation for martial arts excellence (Cheng Zongyou), Mao’s emphasis on materiality and practice in these chapters encourages us to think of epistemic authority as a combined effect of expert readership and expert practice. Since Chapter 84, the first in “Teaching Skills,” began with two texts considered fundamental (Wujing zongyao and Huqian jing) and proceeded to fill out the information in the following chapters primarily with Ming sources, we see chronology being used, yet again, as a framework within which to situate newer knowledge. Fundamental theory precedes praxis, but does not usurp it.

2.4.5 Military Supplies and Transport (Junzi sheng 軍資乘)

The subsection on military supply systems, “Military Supplies and Transport” (hereafter, “Supplies”), might be conceptualized as the section on the care and feeding of horses and humans. It occupies Chapters 93 through 147, and contains subsections on the following topics: camps (ying 營, Chapters 93–95), making war (zhan 戰, Chapters 96–107), attacking (gong 攻, especially technologies for attacking walled compounds, Chapters 108–109), defending

²⁰⁷ 「此卷批點悉照程氏原本，附其凡例于後。」 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 90, 16b–17a. For more detail on Cheng’s punctuation, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.
(especially walled compounds, *shou* 守, Chapters 110–115), water (including naval warfare, *shui* 水, Chapters 116–118), fire (all uses of fire and firearms, *huo* 火, Chapters 119–134), provisions (including food, transport, medicine and other topics, *xiang* 餉, Chapters 135–145), and the care of horses (*ma* 馬, Chapters 146–147). The choice of sources in each of these sections and Mao’s methods of citing and ordering those sources reinforce the conclusions that (1) citations served to position information within Mao’s imagined shared library of information, and (2) authority was derived from knowledge of both text and praxis.

The diversity of topics in this section calls for a diversity of sources and citation practices. For example, even within the chapters on “camps,” some texts already cited in previous chapters appear (eg. *Sima fa*; *Li Jing bingfa* 李靖兵法),\(^{208}\) while other passages are preceded by less familiar titles (eg. *Xiaying suanfa* 下營算法, Calculation methods for setting down camp).\(^{209}\) Many others are preceded by no title at all. Likewise, Chapter 99, the fourth chapter of the section on making war, is the first section explaining the meaning of flags and banners (*jingqi* 旌旗). It cites *Huqian jing*\(^{210}\) at length, but does not consistently tell the reader where new passages and graphics are taken from. Chapter 102, the first on weaponry, addresses bows and arrows. In this chapter, we see multiple instances of Mao inserting himself as commentator with the words “Master Mao says” instead of quoting other texts. As weaponry gets more complicated, Mao’s voice gets stronger as a guide to the reader. Further crediting of the origins of this knowledge is unnecessary, I argue, because the obscurity of the title and author’s name might mean it is (1)

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\(^{208}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 95, 1a–1b.
\(^{209}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 95, 3b.
\(^{210}\) Translated above as *Tiger Key Classic*, a focus of the first section “Critiques of Military Formulae.”
unknown to Mao himself, and (2) would mean little to a reader looking for markers of authority. These sources belong to the far right side of the bell curve representing the library of information. Chapter 143, the first on medicine for soldiers, is particularly interesting. Where authorities exist to be quoted, Mao cites them. Xu Dong, Tang Shunzhi, and Wang Minghe are all noted in the sections on the medical theory of wounds—presumably to lend those sections authority to readers who might recognize the names or their writings. When he turns to reciting complicated formulas, also taken from multiple sources, citations aren’t given.

All this confirms impressions from the first three main sections of Wu bei zhi, “Critiques,” “Investigations,” and “Systems,” regarding the connection between the citation of names and titles and the verification and valuation of information. Information is cited not to disavow Mao’s role in its authorship, but to borrow the veracity and reliability of an author who is both expert reader and practitioner. If a citation would not fulfill this function, then it is deemed unnecessary. Authorities were those with both comprehensive familiarity with the library of information on the military and, ideally, practical experience.

Chronology remains a principle of organization in these chapters, shaping not just the historical background to the newest information, but also the interpretations readers might draw of their content. For example, Mao writes, in the preface to the section on systems of military camps (yingzhi 營制), “I order the images and explanations of today and the past in order to fully

211 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 143, 2a–4a. For the medical section of Xu Dong’s work from which Mao draws his quotation, see Xu Dong, Huqian jing, vol. 27:3, juan 10. For the medical section of Tang Shunzhi’s work, see Tang Shunzhi, Wu bian, in SKZB, vol. 510, juan 6, 78-93. For Wang Minghe’s medical work, see Wang Minghe, Dengtan bijiu 登壇必究 [Necessary research for ascending to command], in SKJH, zi bu, vol. 35, 360–366.
investigate them.” Similarly in the section on military medicine, we find Mao citing different theories of “incised wounds” in chronological order, beginning with Xu Dong of the Song dynasty (Huqian jing), then Tang Shunzhi writing in the mid-sixteenth century, and then Wang Minghe, writing at the end of the 16th century. Mao doesn’t quote all of the material on incised wounds from each of these texts, but rather quotes selectively. The material from Xu provides a summary of first aid and treatment in the first few hours after being wounded. The material from Tang discusses etiology and related prognoses, then treatments; and the material from Wang discusses a different etiology from Tang, and then its related treatments. The result is a picture of wounds and how they affect the bodies of soldiers, with chronology reinforcing the importance of the order of the information: first aid is more important in practice than etiology, which is more important in turn than treatments, which can only be chosen once etiology is established. In many of the sections included in “Military Supplies and Transport,” chronology reinforces the relationships between text and practice, and Mao’s choice to cite or not to cite continues to be based on whether or not the citation would reinforce the reliability of the source due to its author’s prior fame.

2.4.6  Record of Divination and Geography (Zhan du zai 占度載)

In the last major section of Wu bei zhi, hereafter “Record,” two broad topics are addressed: various kinds of divination and geography and non-Chinese peoples. The section on divination occupies Chapters 148 through 188, and the section on geography, Chapters 189

212 「次序今昔之圖說以備考焉。」Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 93, 3a.
213 Andrew Edmund Goble coined “incised wounds” or “incised injuries” for jinchuang 金瘡, wounds caused by blades. See Goble, Confluences of Medicine in Medieval Japan, xx, and Chapter 5, 89–111.
through 240. In the section on divination Mao takes a slightly different approach to book selection in each subsection, and often explicitly addresses that problem. The section on geography uses an array of sources that would typically occupy the “histories” section of a seventeenth-century library catalog. Mao cites names and titles fairly assiduously, titles that would be numerous, but at least in a genre familiar to most readers.

2.4.6.1 2.5.5.1 Divination (Zhan 占)

In the 40 chapters on divination, diverse methods of divination require different sources, and we see differences in strategy depending on the place the source base occupies in the epistemic framework of his imagined readers (and, presumably, his own reading experience). In the second chapter on divination using the sun, for example, titles are not explicitly cited, but much of the information therein can be found in the widely read Wenxian tongkao (a Yuan text we’ve encountered above).214 In Chapter 161 on divination using the qi of clouds, Mao writes in the preface that the Zhouli 周禮 (Rites of Zhou) and pre-Qin and Han sources are the most reliable for this topic, and therefore what is excerpted here.215 Specific titles are not provided because the information was already widely available, or even memorized: these were the core texts of the library on the left of the bell curve.

In Chapter 162, on divining using wind and rain, Mao begins the chapter by specifying the two sources from which most of the information would be taken, saying that this is the one chapter where he has not divided the sources into pieces and grouped them into varying

214 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 149, 1a; Ma Duanlin, Wenxian tongkao, juan 281, 2236-1.
215 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 161, 1a–1b.
categories, because it would render them less intelligible. Beginning with Chapter 169, the rest of the chapters in the section on divination deal with mathematical divination methods. In Chapter 169, Mao gives a genealogy of the texts he will use and refutes critiques of their value. The preface to Chapter 177 gives the reader three reasons why those who master one of these techniques are few, including the dispersal of the original sources and the difficulty of the necessary calculations. Sometimes, the reason Mao gives for not being particularly explicit with citations is that the books involved are “manifold,” and stating their titles and authors would presumably be of little use to the reader. These texts, unfamiliar to a Ming reader who had not specialized in their study, belong to the far right side of the imaginary bell curve, on the peripheries of the library of military information.

2.4.6.2 Geography (Du 度)

The chapters on geography and non-Chinese peoples pose an interesting change from chronological to spatial organization of information. Mao sets up a framework in which knowledge of the insides of the state is most basic, knowledge of how to defend those insides is second, knowledge of outsiders is next, and unknown outsiders last of all. He writes:

\[\text{\ldots}\]

\[^{216}\text{Ibid., juan 163, 1a–1b.}\]
\[^{217}\text{Ibid., juan 169, 1a–2a. These three methods are “The Great Unity” (Taiyi 太乙), “Strange Gates” (Qimen 奇門), and the “Six Yang Waters” (Liuren 六壬). For an explanation of their function and these translations, see Ho, Chinese Mathematical Astrology. Ho devotes a chapter to each of the systems, specifically, Chapters 3–5. A better translation of Qimen might be “Marvelous Gates.”}\]
\[^{218}\text{Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 177, 1a–2a. Ho states that one reason there might have been so few people learning these techniques is that governments discouraged their spread given their importance in military operations. See Ho, Chinese Mathematical Astrology, 4.}\]
\[^{219}\text{Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 182, 1a–1b.}\]
In recent times kings’ and generals’ discussions of geography are detailed regarding changes [in place names and administrative divisions] and extend to mountains and rivers. Thus they are excessive, and yet regarding the important places they are still lacking. They are not that with which one can speak of military preparedness. Therefore I wrote *Wu bei zhi* on military preparedness and finished it with geography (*du*). Geography is the act of appraising the earth. It is, relying on classical allusions, sorting through the myriad writers, to draw [the earth] to distinguish its foundations, and explain in order to seek its origins. And yet those who are a bit far from being militarily prepared, they can listen for these things in maps and local histories. First is maps of the mainland, detailing all the internal lands. Second is garrison towns, detailing the borderlands. Third is coastal defense, detailing the sea. Fourth is river defense, detailing the rivers. Fifth is the four barbarians, detailing dependent states. Sixth is sea navigation, detailing the expansion of imperial authority and education [of barbarian peoples]. These six are all that which military strength can touch.

近王將軍之談地理也，詳于沿革，旁及山川，則太過矣，而于關要者仍有缺，非所以言武備也，故我志武備而終之以度，度者，度地也，爲按典故，搜眾家，圖以辨其委，說以討其原，而于武備稍遠者，聽之輿圖方史可矣，一曰方輿，詳內地也，二曰鎮戍，詳邊疆也，三曰海防，詳海也，四曰江防，詳江也，五曰四夷，詳屬國也，六曰航海，詳聲教也，之六者，皆兵力之所可及也。220

It is no surprise that the last two sections of *Wu bei zhi* are devoted to, first, the geography and customs of tributary peoples of the Ming dynasty (Mongolian peoples, Jurchen, Japanese, Uyghur peoples, Turfan, Korea etc.), and secondly, maps of territories outside the lands beyond the tributary states explored by Zheng He 鄭和 (d. 1433).221 This categorization scheme is reminiscent of how other Ming books circumscribed the borders of the dynasty and identified the foreign Other.222 If previous sections of *Wu bei zhi* order techniques across time, this section gives life to the space that contained them.


221 The subsection of “Geography” on tributary states (*shuguo* 屬國) runs from Chapter 223 to Chapter 239. The last subsection of “Geography,” navigating the seas (*hanghai* 航海), takes up the final chapter: Chapter 240.

Like some previous sections, the entire section on geography relies extensively on images—in this case, maps. Earlier in this chapter I discuss technical images as “templates for action.” Maps are a bit different, as they do not express the template for a specific action. However, I argued previously that technical images serve another purpose, which is to aid the reader’s imagination in situating technologies in the material world. Maps, similarly, provide a spatial context for the implementation of the classical strategy of “Critiques,” for the historical evidence of strategic excellence in “Investigations,” for the practice of troop formations, training exercises, the delivery of supplies, and the reading of earthly and heavenly signs. Maps give texture to the space in which the preceding information would be applied. Mao writes the following, when he describes the purpose of the maps and explanations in the section on the lands internal to the Ming empire:

I begin with an introduction [to each prefecture fu 府] collecting the murals of the great thinkers of the past in order to present its merits. I follow this with a topographical map in order to present the grand [land] formations of the world. I follow this with a map of counties and districts, in order to show the mutual governance of fire and elegance. I follow this with a scaled map of its territory in order to show how its length and breadth mutually converge. I follow this with a sum total of commandaries and districts, chiefs, households, grain taxes, salt taxes, soldiers, horses, and borders in order to make them detailed and clear. I follow this with [a list] of governors general, governors, and provincial intendants in order to show how above and below are mutually held together. I follow this with lists of military officers who defend towns in order to demonstrate thorough military preparedness. I follow this with commandaries and districts. If it is a commandary, then I record its place in the “Tribute of Yu” [chapter of the Book of Documents] in order to show that it possesses a deep origin. I identify its astronomical mansion in order to identify its omens. I illuminate its four borders in order to identify its territory. I lay out the two capitals’ roads so as to demonstrate where to call upon the emperor. I follow commandaries with subprefectures….I follow this with counties….I follow this with garrisons. I investigate which units they lead. Those units that are independent, I set them apart in order to distinguish the real number of soldiers….I have generally used the Collected Statutes as a basis.

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223 Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles, 539 and 150.
In describing prefectures, Mao starts by making textual sense of their geographic location using “Tribute of Yu” (*Yu gong* 禹貢), a chapter of the *Book of Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書), in which the mythical ruler of the Xia dynasty Great Yu 大禹 divides the lands of the earth. It was common practice to start entries in works of historical geography by locating a given place in the “Tribute of Yu.” Mao bases the information in these sections on collected statutes (*huidian* 會典), presumably the *Da Ming huidian*. Each prefecture’s description begins with its mythical beginnings and ends with its current predicaments, using text and image to situate it in historical and contemporary and physical context. Much like the other sections of *Wu bei zhi*, “Geography” relies on the library of information available to the classically literate. Its citations situate specialized information within that broader mental repertoire of texts and draw on shared practices of information organization.

The first section of *Wu bei zhi*, “Critiques,” begins with classics of military philosophy. Mao uses those texts to create a foundational library with which all readers should be familiar. The next section weaves a historical narrative of examples of military successes—the


background against which all later citations will gather meaning. He then remixes authoritative materials on military techniques and technologies, continuing to arrange them in the same chronological order, the dependence on Ming military texts in later chapters made meaningful by their juxtaposition against older texts. Quoted texts are deemed authoritative because their authors had demonstrated success in the field. Readers are guided through a familiar historical narrative, and that narrative acts as the testing grounds for the reliability of an author’s information. In the last chapters of *Wu bei zhi*, readers are guided through landscapes simultaneously historical and contemporary. Expert knowledge of a place demands not just knowing its topography, but its contemporary administrative and historical significance too. The library of information Mao guides his readers through consists of old texts and new. The new texts are considerably more concerned with praxis than the older texts, but it is through the historical verification of the efficacy of the practices described therein that they achieve authority. Likewise, Mao Yuanyi and *Wu bei zhi* are enacted as expert authority and authoritative compilation by this demonstrated mastery of textual knowledge and its possibilities for real-world application.

### 2.5 Late-Ming Bookshelves: *Wu bei zhi* in Libraries and as Library

Mao’s personal library of specialized information on the military was no doubt somewhat idiosyncratic, but to what degree? How representative is the library that *Wu bei zhi* builds of the titles and information available to a literate community in 1621? From surviving Ming-dynasty catalogs of major government and private libraries, it is clear that *Wu bei zhi* reproduced contemporary cataloging practices that allowed readers to find meaning in its contents and epistemological framework.
For example, an early Qing library catalog, Huang Yuji’s 黃虞稷 (1629–1691), *Qianqing tang shumu 千頃堂書目* (Thousand Acre Hall catalog) contains 174 works in its section on military experts (*bingjia 兵家*), 11 of which are cited in *Wu bei zhi*, 48 of which are listed in the *Mingshi*, including *Wu bei zhi* itself.\(^{226}\) This suggests that by the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the early Qing dynasty, *Wu bei zhi* was included in major libraries’ collections of books on military theory, techniques, and technologies. It also suggests that many of the titles *Wu bei zhi* relies on extensively were well known to other readers. The repeated appearances of the *Seven Military Classics* in library catalogs of the Ming dynasty further verifies their status as foundational texts, and the appearance of authors like Qi Jiguang, Yu Dayou, and Tang Shunzhi in similar catalogs substantiates the argument that citing their names would have been meaningful to Ming readers.

The most common standard of bibliographical classification found in Ming catalogs is that of the Four Branches (*sibu 四部*), which begins with classics (*jingbu 經部*), follows with histories (*shibu 史部*), then various masters (*zibu 子部*), then literature (*jibu 集部*).\(^{227}\) Military writings are situated under the “various masters” category, with all other technical works (medicine, astronomy, calendric studies, and agriculture, and Confucians and novels).\(^{228}\) *Wu bei zhi’s* references to this classification system assisted readers in placing titles and information in an already familiar knowledge system. Catalogs like *Qianqing tang shumu* employed the four


\(^{228}\) Huang Yuji, *Qianqing tang shumu*, 1–3.
branches, as did other earlier catalogs from the Ming dynasty. Xu Tu’s 徐圖 (b. 1583), *Xingren si chongke shumu* 行人司重刻書目 (Catalog of works re-carved by the Office of Messengers) uses the same four categories, filing military works under the “masters.”229 Two other seventeenth-century catalogs do the same: Qi Chenghan’s 祁承煕 (1563–1628) *Dansheng tang cang shumu* 澹生堂藏書目 (Catalog of books held in Dansheng Hall) and Zhao Qimei’s 趙琦美 (1563–1624) *Maiwang guan shumu* 脈望館書目 (Maiwang Library catalog).230 The latter uses the *Qianzi wen* 千字文 (Thousand character classic) as a system to organize its categories, each category assigned a character from that text. The *Qianzi wen* would have been memorized by every schoolchild, and was used as a two-layer cataloging tool analogous to alphabetical order in the Library of Congress system.231 The well known, idiosyncratic bibliographer and historian Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1541–1620) adds a category to this mix: works on governance (*zhishu* 制書). He divides the military experts category into smaller categories reminiscent of the order in which *Wu bei zhi* approaches military topics: *bingshu* 兵書 (books on strategy, like the *Seven Military Classics*), *junlü* 軍律 (military regulations), *yingzhen* 營陣 (camps and formations), *bing yinyang* 兵陰陽 (Yinyang of the military, including divination methods), and *biance* 邊策 (border policy), much like *Wu bei zhi* saves its discussion of foreign peoples for the very end of the book.232

*Wu bei zhi* does not resemble a library in the sense that it organizes its five main sections

229 Xu Tu, *Xingren si chongke shumu*, 24a.
according to the four branches system. However, like Jiao Hong’s catalog, its overall organization is reminiscent of a specialized version of the four branches system, where military “classics” are filed at the beginning (“Critiques”), followed by military history (“Investigations”), which is then followed by techniques, technologies, and material goods (“Supplies”). Its last section, “Record of Divination and Geography,” breaks this “mini-four branches” mold, but follows the second, no less important system in which the inner is understood in opposition with an outside “other.” The presence of Wu bei zhi and its sources in these catalogs, combined with its replication of expected bibliographical categories and modes of organization, indicate that Wu bei zhi was fairly representative of the “concatenation of texts” that made up this specialized library of information, and further show that its epistemic framework was evolving, but not out of the ordinary.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter began by positing a threefold argument: (1) that the editorial practices and corpus of texts evident in Wu bei zhi indicate that it catered to an imagined audience of classically literate men and formed a library of information or common mental repertoire of texts; (2) that these practices reveal an epistemic framework in which experience and firsthand observation were privileged, but did not function without trusted, textual testimony providing a background of theory and historical context; and (3) citation and organizational practices in Wu bei zhi also reveal that literati expertise in the late Ming, or at least as envisioned by Mao Yuanyi, was a matter of mastery of specialized texts on techniques and technologies arranged against a broader library of common knowledge for the civil examinations. Ideally, an expert also had experience, but minimally, textual mastery showed the potential for master leadership in practice.
One did not exist without the other. In *Wu bei zhi*, Mao Yuanyi’s citation practices establish him as both literatus and military expert and enact *Wu bei zhi* as a representative library of military information.

The corpus of texts *Wu bei zhi* displayed ranged from the military examination canon, to histories widely read in preparation for the civil examinations, to Ming authorities on techniques and technologies of warfare, and geographical materials drawn from local histories. Citations of these sources were used to either situate the information in the context of a broader mental repertoire of texts, or to establish the authority of the text based on the historical successes of the author. Strategies for organizing this information were primarily chronological, both across large swathes of similar material, and within smaller units and chapters of text. Examples of new praxis were verified and made clear against a background of historical precedent. Mao organized knowledge in this way not because later authors were considered less able to access military truths, but because compilers needed a foundation against which to frame changing military technologies and truths. The Ming generals who wrote the texts on troop formations, drilling, the teaching of military arts, supply chains, and weaponry are given meaning in *Wu bei zhi* by their placement after the reproduction of a familiar historical narrative of military successes in “Investigations.” The historical successes of the Ming generals give them authority, but so too does the historical backdrop against which they are positioned. Together, the corpus of texts Mao draws from, and the citation and information organization practices he employs point to an emerging notion of literati expertise that was both textual and experiential. This notion of expertise was grounded in an episteme that privileged observation and experience over text, but only if textual references to theory and history existed to frame and support it.
*Wu bei zhi* began with what might be considered least foreign to its readers raised to believe they were part of a particular historical tradition—a particular reading community of the classically literate. *Wu bei zhi* ends by drawing linguistic and geographical boundaries as to who might be included in that group, and who should be excluded and considered enemies. In between, *Wu bei zhi* paints the topography of what natural geography, what manmade incidents, what highways and alleyways must be known to navigate the space of inclusion in an elite community of readers concerned with statecraft. The next chapter will turn to the people who populated this space, those whose social practices made *Wu bei zhi* what it is.

**Table 1. Images and text attributions according to period in "Formations"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Images describing ideas of Ming strategists (1368–1621)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text excerpts explicitly attributed to Ming authors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images describing ideas of pre-Ming strategists (550 BCE to 1367 CE)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text excerpts explicitly attributed to pre-Ming books</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text excerpts with no explicit attribution</td>
<td>&gt;94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Social Practices and the Co-Making of Compiler and Book

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the social practices that produce a book, and those that simultaneously produce a social identity for its compiler. In the introduction to this dissertation, I drew on Craig Clunas to conceptualize Mao Yuanyi as a multiple object, a “dividual” individual. As Wu bei zhi is a multiple, malleable, abstract or epistemic object, so too is Mao Yuanyi’s identity. Specifically, Clunas has argued that in the Ming dynasty gifted objects, such as painting or poetry, and individual but “dividual” selves mutually constituted one another through the practice of exchange.233 In this chapter we will see Wu bei zhi take form through such social practices, becoming a title and text that calls to mind not just Mao’s expertise in military tactics, supply and history, but also his own family history and other relationships. We then see an identity for Mao Yuanyi take shape that is dependent upon the invocation of the title Wu bei zhi and all that it implies, including his specialized knowledge, intergenerational relationships, relationships with patrons, and horizontal relationships with his peers. The invocation of Wu bei zhi in correspondence enacted the object Wu bei zhi, and Wu bei zhi acted as one focal point around which and through which one facet of Mao’s complicated identity was enacted, even after Mao’s death in 1640.

The story of the formation of Wu bei zhi and the formation of Mao’s own adult identity is intimately tied to the unraveling of possibilities for success in the imperial bureaucracy in the late Ming. If Benjamin Elman’s estimates cited in the introduction are accurate for the late Ming

233 Clunas, Elegant Debts, 11.
(2.6% obtained provincial, *juren* degrees, and 6.4% of *juren* attained a *jinshi* degree), this left thousands, perhaps millions, of unemployed, classically literate men seeking other methods of maintaining their status as part of the literate gentry class (*shidaifu* 士大夫).234 Such men turned to, among other things, the production of technical texts of statecraft and concrete studies and employment as specialized advisers, known as *muliao* 幕僚 and *muyou* 幕友 or *mubin* 幕賓, literally, “tent friends” or “guests,” to those who did pass the examinations.235 Advisers hired as part of a retinue (*mufu* 幕府) had no access to official position, but as we’ll see in Mao’s case, could be promoted by recommendation. Both specialized and classical literacy were integral to their success. This was precisely the path that Mao Yuanyi pursued. *Wu bei zhi* should be viewed as both a product of the struggle for social advancement and a tool of social advancement in constructing an identity suitable for service as an adviser.

This chapter asks, in the absence of a space to succeed as his grandfather and father did in the examination system, how did *Wu bei zhi* make new spaces for Mao Yuanyi’s success? How were new ways of knowing and textual production tied to networks of patronage and friendship in this period? *Wu bei zhi* became one focus among many of identity performance. Mao Yuanyi

235 More will be said on *muyou* below, but for now, note that most scholarship deals with the abundance of *muyou* in the Qing dynasty. James H. Cole describes *muyou*, specifically, legal clerks, in the late-Qing context as “private secretaries.” See Cole, “The Shaoxing Connection: A Vertical Administrative Clique in Late Qing China,” 318. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. also uses the term “private secretaries” and “tent friends” to refer to Qing-dynasty *muyou*, See Wakeman, “Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China,” 178. For an early study of the *mufu* system in the late Qing that touches on its revival in the Ming, see Folsom, *Friends, Guests, and Colleagues*, 38–57. The best studied variety of adviser was that of the legal clerk. See, for example, Chen, “Legal Specialists and Judicial Administration in Late Imperial China, 1651–1911,” 1–54; and Susumu Fuma, “Litigation Masters and the Litigation System of Ming and Qing China,” 79–111. For an older summary of scholarship on the *mufu* system, see Porter, “The Mu-Fu System: A Bibliographical Introduction,” 56–77.
himself became a social microcosm defined by his relationships with family, patrons, peers, and the production and exploitation of an important concrete studies text within these networks. Doing so allowed Mao Yuanyi to pursue a career as an adviser in the retinue of a highly placed official, and therefore maintain his gentry status and serve in a position adjacent to the civil bureaucracy.

In his own letters to friends and patrons, Mao Yuanyi deploys his statecraft compendium in conjunction with policy analysis to demonstrate his expertise and seek employment. He presents himself as a pinnacle of literati competence and military expertise. In Chapter 2, *Wu bei zhi* embodied an episteme wherein both classical literacy and textual knowledge of practical techniques were necessary to build a reputation as an expert. Here, we will see the epistolary practices wherein Mao managed to build up *Wu bei zhi* as an object that proved his expertise and simultaneously carve an identity as a statecraft expert, perfect for the role of *muyou* in a military retinue. In Mao Yuanyi’s correspondence, the objects *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi-the-expert were enacted through accepted practices as inseparable and interdependent objects.

This chapter will begin with a description of the social and cultural context in which Mao Yuanyi wrote and published the letters examined here, including the urban book collecting culture of Nanjing and rhetorical and cultural tension between the civil or literary (*wen* 文) and the martial (*wu* 武) that many late-Ming gentry questioned, involving themselves deeply in martial culture and military studies. Literati like Mao who were perpetual “students” (*shusheng* 書生), classically literate men who had not passed a provincial or metropolitan examination, thrived in these spaces where traditional binaries of class and culture grayed. The chapter then moves on to analyze the epistolary practices through which the abstract, epistemic object *Wu bei*
zhi and Mao Yuanyi took shape. First, the chapter outlines Mao’s letters requesting prefaces for *Wu bei zhi* before its printing. Whom did he ask and why? How did he ask them? How did he present the book and himself? Second, the chapter examines prefatory authors’ reproduction of Mao’s own rhetoric in their prefaces. In these two sections, the chapter explores a tension that appears in letters and prefaces between Mao’s family expectations for him to pursue a civil career, and his own desire to quit the civil examination system in favor of specializing in military studies and making himself useful to the state. How exactly did he invoke *Wu bei zhi* in social exchange to resolve this tension and flourish? Fourth, the chapter employs four case studies of Mao’s communications with influential men in the civil bureaucracy and his strategies for seeking and sometimes refusing employment. How did Mao establish his identity as a military expert? How was *Wu bei zhi* mobilized in this process? The chapter concludes by tying these social practices as manifest in Mao’s letters to the late-Ming understanding of expertise rooted in the mastery of technical theory and the potential to apply it to policy.

### 3.2 Environment and Context: Books, Martial Arts, and Expertise in Nanjing

Several scholars have addressed how the practices of textual exchange between elite, literate men have been part of the construction of individuals’ identity across imperial China, specifically the exchange of letters, poetry, prefaces, and biographies.²³⁶ Book production and consumption were equally important in this process. Joseph McDemott has argued that literati’s

²³⁶ For the Tang dynasty, see Shields, *One Who Knows Me*; for the Eastern Han, see Zhao Lu, *In Pursuit of the Great Peace*. On male friendship in particular, see Huang, “Male Friendship in Ming China: An Introduction,” 2–33. On elegiac biographies of women as a medium of identity construction for elite men, see Huang, *Intimate Memory: Gender and Mourning in Late Imperial China*.
sense of collective identity in the late Ming was inextricably tied to the production and consumption of books, including the exchange of books. Chapter 1 already touched on the importance of Nanjing as a center for this kind of activity, especially in Mao Yuanyi’s life. McDermott argues that access to extensive libraries was limited in the late Ming. While individual bibliophiles and families amassed large collections, access to such libraries was restricted; practices of book exchange in Jiangnan were often limited to close friends of the owners of libraries, and literary coteries publishing each others’ writings. Mao’s family was, in fact, heavily involved in collation and publishing in their home county. Prefaces to *Wu bei zhi* describe Mao taking part in circles of exchange and reading as many books from private libraries as he could access. He is praised for opening up his family’s library—not by allowing access but by copying into *Wu bei zhi* the contents of the military books therein. The prefaces that praise this “generosity” reflect his circle of friends’ concern with access to books.

Mao Yuanyi’s experiences as a young adult were shaped by his access to well connected friends in Nanjing. In a preface to another set of collected writings, Mao recounts that he moved to Nanjing at the age of 19, and traveled around Zhejiang and Jiangsu. Much of his third decade of life was spent in or near this city, which held ample opportunity to meet the well connected friends who would write the prefaces to *Wu bei zhi*. Even if Mao’s family had not been well connected and involved in the printing of books, Mao’s presence in Nanjing and participation in poetry exchanges with many of the men examined in this chapter would have given him access to books.

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239 Zhao Hongjuan, “Wan Ming Jiangnan wang zu de bian kan huo dong yu wan Ming du shi,” 144–147.
240 Mao Yuanyi, “Preface,” in *Shimin shangxin ji*, in *SKJH, ji bu*, vol. 110, 1a–3a.
to book markets and collectors. Gu Qiyuan, one of the authors of a preface for Mao, and Qian Qanyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664), the author of the only surviving biography of Mao, were heavily involved in book trading and collection circles in Nanjing in this period. Mao Yuanyi, even living slightly down the road from his grandfather’s library, would not have lacked for opportunities to socialize with and borrow from other book collectors. Chen Guanzhi has argued that men whose careers had not gone particularly well in the civil service would often be sent to Nanjing, the secondary capital. This made for a lively scholarly scene.

The literati crowds of Nanjing did not limit themselves to displays of decadence and literary pursuits, but were rather very much concerned with the military affairs and culture of the day. Zhao Yuan and Kathleen Ryor have documented the tendency of military men to participate in literati culture and vice versa in this period. Zhao Yuan and Wang Hung-tai have made convincing arguments that literati society discussed the military and other problems of statecraft in the late Ming, and that, in fact, these topics provided fodder for social organization, especially among elites in urban areas. Urban elites like Mao Yuanyi gathered to discuss strategy and martial arts. The practice of gathering for martial arts practice, for some, became more romanticized and less attached to the reality of war. It is clear that like literati circles of poetry exchange, book production and consumption and the circles of men who studied military affairs

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241 McDermott has also argued that circles of poetry exchange were even more important to relationships between late-Ming literati than the exchange of material books McDermott, A Social History of the Chinese Book, 167.
242 Chen Guanzhi, Mingdai Nanjing siren cangshu yanjiu, 71, 120.
and practiced martial arts, the literary (wen) and the martial (wu) were thoroughly intertwined in the social culture of late-Ming Nanjing.

The mutual enmeshment of the literary and the martial in late-Ming Nanjing gives lie to the old notion that these two ethos were entirely separate in Chinese society. The literary, or wen, generally referred to an ethos that valued intellectual products such as literature and philosophy.246 The martial, wu, referred to anything to do with the military, violence, and war. These were never quite separate in any discourse across imperial China, but as Nicola Di Cosmo puts it, “…it is equally undeniable that if Chinese culture as a collective agent has produced a perception of itself that is fundamentally at odds with what we might regard as 'military values,' as opposed to civil or literary ones, this has had an impact on the way in which military events have been perceived, recorded, transmitted, and even rationalized.”247 This was no less true of late-Ming Nanjing. Zhao Yuan argues that men of certain social classes, despite active interest and participation in martial arts and the armies of the state, held fast to literati identities. Zhao Yuan writes that because of a sense of crisis in the late Ming, military affairs were important to members of the urban elite, but one often heard complaints of lowly students (shusheng) who “discussed military affairs” (tanbing 談兵). Zhao argues that these lowly students were viewed with some annoyance as they traveled far and wide in pursuit of social distinction. In fact, there was a sense of amateurishness about those who presumed to discuss military affairs.248

246 Bol, This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T’ang and Sung China.


248 Zhao Yuan does not believe that military-focused discussions of statecraft were demonstrative of “expertise” in the modern sense. Zhao writes, “That which this book discusses as having been included in the narrow meaning of ‘the study of the military’ at this time has the general character of ‘the study of statecraft;’ even if it emphasizes a ‘statecraft’ orientation (motivation, goal setting), it does not have the characteristic of ‘expertise,’ [and] can’t
had succeeded neither in the civil examinations or anything else. The epithet *shusheng* will appear in the letters in this chapter as Mao admits to his status, but simultaneously argues that he is not, in fact, an amateur, but has a breadth of specialized knowledge to apply to governance. *Shusheng*, he will argue, are not as useless as some might think. He asks his compatriots to support this claim. Their reinforcement of that claim depended in part on Mao’s participation in circles of military activity and discussion described by Wang Hung-tai and Zhao Yuan, but also his production of his own text to demonstrate that specialized knowledge.

Mao Yuanyi sought to establish himself in this environment as a specialist of a sort, though any specialist in “concrete studies” also needed to prove himself competent in more traditional forms of social exchange like shared poetry, prefaces, and letters. Men like Li Weizhen achieved success both inside and outside the examination system by exploiting circles of literate exchange and book collecting and publishing.249 Mao reached out to such “reputable masters” or “boss editors”250 to write prefaces for *Wu bei zhi*. Through a combination of interacting with more traditional specialist literati in the book trade and carving out his own identity as a military expert, Mao Yuanyi sought to make a splash in a culture heavily dependent on practices of book and poetry exchange. In contrast to the “boss editors” of late-Ming Nanjing like Chen Jiru, who chose to eschew state service, the role of one particular publication in the

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rendering visible a man who was unwilling to give up the notion of service to the state has remained relatively unexamined. Alternative paths to supporting oneself outside of the state apparatus are well-documented. Alternative paths into the state apparatus less so.

The avenue of the muyou was Mao’s path to civil service. These muyou had become a privatized secretarial force controlled by individual officials by the end of the Wanli period. They had specialized knowledge of administration, and served their superior in executing daily tasks and sometimes strategy. There is much discussion about what, precisely, muyou did on a daily basis, but not many elite literati left records of the practices that gained them the position. For Mao, the social practices that led him to be a muyou were the same as those that shaped one facet of a complex literati identity, the military specialist, and the object Wu be zhi as an embodiment of his expertise.

These social practices are best observed in Mao’s published collections of prose and poetry. The most explicit demonstrations of Mao’s social practices both producing and promoting Wu bei zhi and therefore himself are found in his collections of letters in Shimin sishi ji (Collected writings of Shimin at age 40). The earliest letters in this collection

251 On families presenting themselves as literati despite merchant or artisan origins, see McDermott, A Social History of the Chinese Book, 35–36. Compare Mao’s experience with those described in McDermott, “The Art of Making a Living in Sixteenth-Century China,” 63–81. Mao chose to make his living via his family’s wealth and a job as a muyou or muliao, instead of acting as a “boss editor.”

252 On dating of the development of muyou in the Ming and their tasks, see Wang Quanwei, “Lun Mingdai zhou xian muguan de zhiquan zhuankanbian,” 41–47. Note the use of muguan in the title, which was current before the privatization of the practice, which began in the Jiajing period. Wang describes the daily tasks of administration under prefects and magistrates that muguan and muyou might have been assigned.

253 All references to letters are drawn from Mao Yuanyi, SSJ. The book collects more than 235 letters from Mao Yuanyi to friends, family, strangers, and even local administrative units.
are dated to 1608, and the latest to 1633. The focus of this chapter is letters that mention *Wu bei zhi* explicitly, those requesting prefaces for the book between 1618 and 1619, and those written immediately after the printing of *Wu bei zhi* between 1621 and 1623 to men who might potentially employ him as an adviser or recommend him to official service. Mao took the civil examinations at the provincial level four times, in 1612, 1615, 1618, and 1621. Spurred by news of troubling losses to Nurhaci (1559–1626) and his Jurchen armies, first the city of Fushun in 1618, and the Battle of Sarhu in 1619, Mao prepared *Wu bei zhi* for printing and arranged for its prefaces to be written between 1618 and 1621. He finally decided to give up on the civil examinations in 1621 and printed *Wu bei zhi*. He then turned to the task of promoting his book and himself in his correspondence with officials who were positioned to use him as an adviser on military affairs. After refusing several offers, he accepted a position with Sun Chengzong in 1623. This chapter will next explore the records Mao Yuanyi left of his own social practice, and what this meant for the shaping of at least one facet of Mao’s identity, “the military specialist,” and *Wu bei zhi* as an object.

### 3.3 Won’t You Please Write Me a Preface?

Chronologically, the first group of relevant letters are those between Mao Yuanyi and the prefatory authors for *Wu bei zhi*. These letters display a combination of social and rhetorical practices that shape Mao into a military specialist in the context of the literati circles of Nanjing and beyond, and *Wu bei zhi* into an embodiment of his textual and practical expertise. The social and rhetorical practices examined here are embedded in these letters and very much mutually

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intertwined. It is useful here, to think of rhetoric and the narrative structure of these letters as a social practice in itself.\textsuperscript{255} The following will follow the basic narrative structure of Mao’s requests to various people to write prefaces for \textit{Wu bei zhi}, whether distributed across one or many letters. First, Mao chooses reputable literati to validate his own status in that interpretive community. He then begins his letters by reinforcing this relationship. He then establishes that the state needs literati like Mao who have specialized knowledge of the military, and books like \textit{Wu bei zhi} to educate more literati in this way. The letters then show how Mao Yuanyi is best suited to fulfill this need, and finally how \textit{Wu bei zhi} helps him do so.

Mao needed to first choose the people from whom he wished to solicit prefaces. Mao requests prefaces from both close friends and literati famous within and without the civil bureaucracy who could help him establish his pedigree as a literatus. He draws on debts owed to himself or his family, and includes his own preface and tables of contents for \textit{Wu bei zhi} in the letters. He writes to Li Weizhen, Gu Qiyuan, Fu Ruzhou (died ca. 1623),\textsuperscript{256} Zhang Shiyi 張師繹, Lang Wenhuang 朗文喚, and Song Xian 宋獻 (ca. 1622). These men were selected not for their specialist knowledge in military affairs, but their reputation as literati and their relationships with Mao Yuanyi.

The very first thing the letters do is establish how Mao Yuanyi knows of or knows the recipient. The letters Mao writes to these authors all clearly address themselves to a friend or


\textsuperscript{256} Zhou Junfu, ed., \textit{Mingdai zhuanji congkan suoyin}, 994.
acquaintance Mao knows personally or through his family. Often, there was a family connection too, and their acquaintance with his family helped cultivate friendships with influential peers and patrons. For example, Mao Yuanyi’s first letter to Li Weizhen indicates that Mao and Li had met earlier in 1618, likely in Nanjing, and that Mao was supposed to contribute to a collection of writings Li was putting together. His (public) epistolary relationship with Li Weizhen begins, in fact, with a 1618 letter requesting Li’s assistance writing biographies for his deceased grandfather and father. As early as 1618, Mao sought to establish himself with elite, well-known members of his Nanjing poetry circles as the scion of a proven literati and military lineage, before proceeding to request a preface, sometimes over the course of several letters.

For closer friends, he felt able to chastise those who would refuse his request, and establish that the relationship between the prefatory author and Mao himself was more important than any military expertise the author might have. In one particularly memorable exchange, for which I was only able to find Mao Yuanyi’s half, prefatory author Fu Ruzhou objects to writing a preface, because, he claims, he is not qualified. In a letter Mao dates to 1619, Mao Yuanyi receives this with some disappointment, invoking their own relationship instead of a relationship with Mao’s family:

I humbly received your advice on my book for kings and lords, generals and chancellors, and I say none but you can write a preface for it. Moreover, you said that anyone not a master [of the topic] is inadequate [to the task of] writing a foreword for this book. Oh, Yuandu! You look to me with excessive hope; you trust in me far too much; but you also know me deeply.

257 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning fangbo shu yi wuwu” [First letter to Li Benning Fangbo in 1618], in SSJ, juan 70, 1a–2a.

258 Yuandu is Fu Ruzhou’s courtesy name (hao 號).
Mao then argues that writing a preface for *Wu bei zhi* did not depend on Fu Ruzhou’s mastery of the material therein, but on Fu Ruzhou’s knowledge of the author and his ability to interpret the author’s intent. He gives both historical examples and examples of such exchanges from within what is presumably a common network of friends. The practice of writing prefaces for a book about which one knew nothing of the content was widespread and recognized to be an act of one member of a friendship network performing familiarity with another. Fu Ruzhou needed to vouch for Mao as a literatus, not for his specialist knowledge.

After selecting men of good repute and establishing their relationship with himself and therefore his status as a classically literate man, Mao uses other rhetorical moves and choices to establish his own competence with specialist knowledge of the military, narrative choices the prefatory authors later copy. Mao first outlines the necessity for literati involvement in military affairs given the 1618–1619 crisis in Liaodong, and the need to make dispersed information on military affairs available to those literati. *Wu bei zhi* is then touted as part of the means by which he fulfills these obligations. He will eventually argue that he is suited to fill military positions given his experience compiling *Wu bei zhi*, but these arguments are reserved for other letters to men in the civil bureaucracy.

The series of letters to Li Weizhen provides the clearest examples of Mao’s attempts to establish the demands of the current situation. First, he argues that no one currently appreciates...

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259 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Fu Yuandu shu yi jiwei” 與傅遠度書一己未 [First letter to Fu Yuandu in 1619]. in *SSJ, juan* 78, 1a.
the talents of literati (wenren 文人)\textsuperscript{260} in governance, including their military exploits. He laments that it is not that literati have forsaken the real world for literary pursuits, but that the world has forgotten them. He writes:

There are indeed people who say that literati do not contribute to the world, [but] I think this is not so. It is, rather, that they are not employed, and even if they are employed, they are not employed fully. I don’t have the leisure to speak of moral integrity and scholarly careers. Even if we speak of the way of state management, say, for example, as Han Yu [768–824] pacified Huaixi, or as Su Xun’s [1009–1066] writing of the official histories was indeed the will of Wang Anshi [1021–1086], or as Su Shi’s [1036–1101] talents were marvelous, or as, in this dynasty, Tang Shunzhi [1507–1560] and my grandfather pacified the pirates and suppressed the Miao rebellions, or as Wang Shizhen [1526–1590] had great talent in taking on high office, or even your storied feats in state management—none of these will change my fate….This is, straightforwardly, the world forsaking literati. How could it be that the literati are the ones forsaking the world? The strength of the literati can spur the past and present together, encourage the multitude and unify the divergent, despite being unable to win a decent position even for a moment. How much more difficult is it, then, if you are not a chosen one, to hope to be used in government?

\textsuperscript{260} Until this point, I have used the terms “literati” and “gentry” fairly interchangeably. In this chapter, Mao Yuanyi often refers to shidafu 士大夫, the gentry class, and wenren 文人, those who engage in literary studies, or literati, between which there is considerable overlap. These words will be translated as such. Wenren could, in many contexts, be translated as “belletrist,” but the specificity of belles-lettres doesn’t quite get at the variety of literary activity literati engaged in, and it implies a lack of depth that seventeenth-century literati would certainly have objected to for their work in moral philosophy, concrete studies, and statecraft, among other things. Even poetry served more than an aesthetic purpose.

\textsuperscript{261} Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, “Shang Li Benning Taichang shu si xinyou” 上李本寧太常書四辛酉 [Fourth letter submitted to Li Benning Taichang in 1621], in SSJ, juan 70, 6b–7b. Much of the source material in this chapter is from this collection of Mao’s writings.
In writing to Li Weizhen, Mao puts himself forward as an underdog. In a world that has undervalued the contributions of literati, even if they contribute in meaningful, concrete ways to the state—even if they were as talented as Mr. Li Weizhen—Mao’s fate remains unchanged, as he is not one of “the chosen.” He would later come back to what one does to solve both one’s own lack of occupation and the state problems. His first agenda was to establish that there was a military crisis and that in the past literati had been essential to solving such crises, but currently no one respects literati’s military erudition, if they have it. In other such letters, Mao argues that there is a distinct lack of people who possess such erudition. To Gu Qiyuan, he writes,

When the affairs of the Northeast arose, everyone in the world was talking about soldiers. But those who knew, didn't speak, and those who spoke, didn't know. I was somewhere in the middle and didn't dare speak. For this I compiled *Wu bei zhi.*

東事起天下多言兵，然知者不言，言者不知。竊概於中而不敢言也，為輯《武備志》。262

Here Mao Yuanyi begins to set himself up as part of the solution to these problems, in particular, the problem of literati ignorance of military affairs.

Mao will have to present a twofold argument to demonstrate that he is most suited to tackling the problem of literati ignorance of military affairs in this period of crisis. First, he will have to argue that even though he has failed the civil examinations, there are other ways to be of use to the Ming state, specifically compiling textual resources necessary to leaders involved in the Liaodong military crisis. Secondly, he will need to argue that he is particularly well situated to fulfill this task because of the bibliographical resources of his family and his family’s storied history of involvement in military affairs.

262 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Gu Taichu Shaozai shu yi 1621,” in *SSJ, juan* 70, 12a–b.
The letters Mao writes to Gu Qiyuan, Li Weizhen, and Zhang Shiyi are an exercise in justifying his focus on a discipline of “state management” in lieu of more traditional employ for literati. He makes an argument that this discipline is, in fact, part of a long-held tradition in which literati have participated, and that the practical value of texts produced in this tradition for the state has more value than his pursuit of a career via examination pathways. Mao first establishes his family’s civil service pedigree and military accomplishments. Specifically, Mao claims that his grandfather’s achievements were not limited to the civil service. In the letter where he asks Li Weizhen to provide a preface for *Wu bei zhi*, he invokes his grandfather in the same breath as Tang Shunzhi when enumerating the statecraft achievements of literati, making the argument that literati are often far more practical and in tune with the needs of the times than given credit for. In this case, he credits Tang and Mao Kun with the suppression of pirates on the east coast and other rebellions. Mao paints a picture of two modest men who did not seek fame, but sought to serve, and were therefore slandered. Mao writes,

> The reputation of my late grandfather's humble writings has been transmitted for 60 years. But he only rose and fell along the path of an official for 20 years. Because he was upright, he was slandered; because he was proud, he was abused. Out of ten days he could only hold his head up high for three. But he used soldiers like a god, and guided the people as [easily as] breathing. The gentry can all speak to this. My late father was indifferent to fame, and did not pursue a lofty name. If he didn't attain high office, that was just the way his life went.

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263 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning Taichang shu si, xinyou,” *SSJ, juan* 70, 6b–8b.

264 Mao Kun’s biography in *Dictionary of Ming Biography* describes at some length his three dismissals from office and involvement in attempts to justify the misuse of money by Hu Zongxian in the pirate fighting. See Fang and Glahn, “MAO K’un,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1042–1047.
Similarly, in 1621, to Gu Qiyuan, he wrote, “My predecessors collected books and excelled at literature, but I can’t take up their career. They cherished service in government, but I cannot fulfill their legacy.” Mao’s letters to Zhang Shiyi regarding *Wu bei zhi* are even more explicit about his failures in the examination system. In 1621 Mao failed for the fourth and final time, giving up pursuit of this highly competitive path to government office in favor of an alternative. Mao expresses regret at failing to pass the examinations, and shame in failing his ancestors. Mao characterizes his efforts with *Wu bei zhi* as a mission that replaces his pursuit of a career via the examinations:

> To date, I have pursued office for 15 years, but in the end was not accepted. These simple and crude qualifications are insufficient to avert calamity. It can be seen that this generation, with so many worthies, won't wait upon the assistance of one gentleman. Thus, since last autumn (1619), I have set my will on escaping society and uniting the military masters I have studied all my life into one book. Its title is *Wu bei zhi*.

Mao claims to retire from public life because he feels himself useless--except in that he can compile and print a useful book. Mao's letter to Gu Qiyuan requesting a preface sums up Mao's

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265 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning fangbo shu yi wuwu” 上李本寧方伯書一戊午 [First letter to Li Benning Fangbo in 1618], in *SSJ, juan 70*, 1a–2a.

266 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Gu Taichu Shaozai shu yi, xin you,” in *SSJ, juan 70*, 11b. 「先人世典文章，而儀不能修其職。先人有懷當世而儀不能竟其業。」

267 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Zhang Kexi shu er gengshen” 與張克嶲書二庚申 [Second letter to Zhang Kexi in 1620], in *SSJ, juan 76*, 10a.
entire narrative in about four pages. He writes of his life history, how he found in his twenties that he couldn't live up to his family's legacy placing accomplished literati in the civil service. But, he had inherited his grandfather's military studies resources and made a life study of them. This was where he swore to make his mark.

When Mao writes to request prefaces from the five men who end up writing for him, he inevitably mentions his fraught relationship with his own ego, and failure to live up to the legacies of his late grandfather and father. Mao Yuanyi takes special care to portray Mao Kun as a military expert with connections to other experts like Tang Shunzhi. It is implied that Mao inherits these intergenerational relationships, and therefore some degree of military knowledge. Mao Kun’s library, Tower of White Flowers (Baihua lou 白華樓), is also repeatedly mentioned in secondary literature as proof of his grandson’s access to the best resources.268 Not only did Mao’s family have intimate knowledge of well-known, successful generals, but they possessed books to which no others had access. We even see the results of Mao’s intergenerational connections via his grandfather in the contents of Wu bei zhi itself, in which Mao Yuanyi chose to cite contemporaries of his grandfather. Mao cites Yu Dayou, Qi Giguang, and Tang Shunzhi extensively. Mao Kun was a great admirer of Tang Shunzhi’s work in particular. Mao Yuanyi also uses maps from the sixteenth-century map compilation Chou hai tu bian (籌海圖編 Illustrated Atlas for Mapping the Seas), compiled by Zheng Ruozeng (鄭若曾 1503-1570), and

268 See, for example: Lin Qionghua, “Mao Yuanyi yan jiu,” 8; Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi tan xi,” 7; Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi yan jiu,” 1.
sponsored by Hu Zongxian 胡宗憲 (1512-1565), with whom Mao Kun worked extensively.269 Mao Yuanyi’s letters to potential prefatory authors for *Wu bei zhi* draw on the same intergenerational connections to establish his literary and military pedigree and on the resources of his grandfather’s library to establish his suitability as a candidate for solving the problem of literati ignorance of military affairs.

Having argued that Mao Yuanyi is the person with the appropriate literati skills, family background, and bibliographical resources to compile a book for literati on military affairs, letters to prefatory authors finally go on to argue that *Wu bei zhi* is the perfect book to be used to this purpose. To Li Weizhen, Mao writes that he endeavors to make a book of practical utility:

> Therefore, I humbly desire to retire, narrate and compile the successes of the abundant writings [on the topic], lay out their each and every accomplishment, making it easy for readers to look at, easy for listeners to listen to, and easy for practitioners to follow. Indeed, I cannot but humbly hope, and desire to make myself known to all under heaven and subsequent generations.

> 故儀之志，竊欲退而論述，彙眾言之成，抒一己之得，使覽者易爲視、聞者易爲聽、行者易爲循。亦區區不得已之懷，而欲自見於天下後世者也。270

Here, Mao writes that in the absence of the ability to be employed by the government, he seeks to make a name for himself among his contemporaries and pass on something of himself to later

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269 In fact, the University of British Columbia holds a 1693 copy of *Chou hai tu bian* in which Mao Kun is listed as a contributing editor. *Wu bei zhi* enacts Mao’s grandfather’s social relationships by whom it cites. It also enacts those relationships when it is exchanged as a book written by the son of Mao Guojin and grandson of Mao Kun. On untangling the attribution of authorship in various editions of *Chou hai tu bian*, see the following: Song Kefu 宋克夫 and Shao Jinjin, “Lun Hu Zongxian zai Chou hai tu bian bian zhuan zhong de zhong yao zuo yong,” 162; and Li Zhizhong, “Tan Chou hai tu bian de zuo zhe yu ban ben,” 68–72.

270 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning Taichang shu si xinyou” 上李本寧太常書四辛酉 [Fourth letter submitted to Li Benning Taichang in 1620], in *SSJ*, juan 70, 6b–7b.
generations. He’ll accomplish it by compiling the best texts on a chosen topic, and organizing them so that they are easily comprehensible to readers (as we explored in the last chapter) and legible to those who would practice their techniques. Still writing to Li Weizhen, Mao first laments that military writings are ill preserved and disorganized because most literati look down on the study of military affairs. Mao writes:

Yet, the ancients who achieved the same thing as me are many. Therefore, there are books recording the accomplishments of the 100 schools, but, [as for] the path of the military governance, if they are not outright disdainful toward it, people at least keep it at a distance. Therefore the words [of military works] are diffuse and cannot be mirrored. They are tricky and cannot be copied. My heart mourns this. And so, I composed *Wu bei zhi*.

然古人之得我同然者眾矣。故百家鴻業具有成書,唯經武一途,人非厭而鄙之,即震而遠之。故其言紛糾而不可考鏡,詭奇而不可擬摹。心竊悲之。故作武備志。

Mao then lays out the format of the book and the scope of the project, writing:

I gathered the subtle principles of the ancient military experts and called it "Critiques of Military Formulae." I collated the marvelous strategies of the famous, ancient generals and called it "Investigations of Strategy." I collected the techniques for setting up formations and training soldiers and called it "Systems of Troop Formations and Training." I distinguished systems of camps and battle, attack and defense, naval warfare and firearms, horses and supplies, and called it "Military Supplies and Transport." I exhausted the theories of heavenly phenomena, the five phases, divination by wind and tones; studied the Taiyi, Qimen, and Liuren arts; traced political geography and fortresses and the defense of rivers and seas; and investigated the affairs of the nine barbarian tribes of the East and the eight remote states of the South outside our borders, and called it "Record of Divination and Geography."

I wanted to make it so that no writings of the military schools were left out, and those that study the military missed nothing. Therefore, I collected and collated [these materials] over the course of 15 years. I concentrated on it for three years. In making it, my hair turned gray and my spirit became all dried up. Fortunately, it was finished in 240 chapters, and it has over 100 topic divisions and analytic categories. The books I gathered

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272 On these three methods of divination, see Ho, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology*. See note 215 above.
After describing the content and format of *Wu bei zhi* at length, Mao sums up the letter with a self-effacing question: “Sir, could you possibly have a word or two evaluating its [*Wu bei zhi*’s] successes and failures?” For those prefatory authors that might have useful comments on the content of *Wu bei zhi*, Mao requests critiques. One wonders how Mao managed to send a copy of a 240-chapter manuscript to anyone for reading. He likely did not. For those too far away to meet in person, he sent his own preface and tables of contents. He writes as much for both Li Weizhen and Gu Qiyuan. For example, to Gu Qiyuan, he writes, “I’ve respectfully included its foreword and table of contents for you to consider.”

We see similar narrative structures, though truncated, in letters requesting comments, but not prefaces, from other acquaintances between 1619 and 1621. Mao’s picture of *Wu bei zhi* as a text that would save the state from its current crisis was distributed quite widely. For example, in 1619, Mao Yuanyi writes to Xu Guangqi, a Christian convert and known aficionado of statecraft studies, requesting feedback on the preface and contents of *Wu bei zhi*, hoping for feedback from

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273 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning Taichang shu si xinyou,” in *SSJ, juan 70*, 7b–8b.
274 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Li Benning Taichang shu si xinyou,” in *SSJ, juan 70*, 8b. 「先生能無一言評其得失乎？」
275 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Gu Taichu Shaozai shu yi xinyou,” in *SSJ, juan 70*, 13a. 「敬函其敍目以獻。惟閣下憫而教之。」

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someone with a “like mind” studying similar topics (tongxin tongxue zhe 同心同學者). The letter begins with a long rumination on current problems in military administration.276 In 1619, to Tang Shiji 唐世濟 (1570–1649), Mao begins with ruminating on strategy regarding Kaiyuan and Fushun, and says that he composed Wu bei zhi in response to their loss, then asks Tang to look at the prefaces as they have been circulating a while now to mixed reviews. In 1621, he writes again to say that he had sent copy of the printed book in the sixth month for Tang to look at, which suggests that Mao was willing to circulate full copies after it was printed.277 Missing from these letters is the recounting of Mao’s life and family history that he always supplies in letters to prefatory authors. The prefatory authors are careful to recount this in full in their prefaces.

Over and over again, this is the narrative Mao repeats, with changes here and there for the particular interests of potential patrons of his book. The Ming dynasty is in danger, literati can save it, but only if they pay attention to military affairs. Literati are insufficiently knowledgeable about military affairs, but Mao Yuanyi has the resources to produce a book for such men. He is perfectly positioned to do so as he has failed to succeed in the examinations, but has the literati education to make the sources legible to precisely the men who need them. That said, he writes, kind friends who know me so well, won’t you write me a preface? These letters argue for a way of being a literatus that blends the literary (wen 文) and the martial (wu 武), drawing on the information collection techniques of the civil to shape a military identity. Mao Yuanyi portrays

276 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Xu Xuanhu Zanshan shu yi jiwei” 與徐玄扈贊善書一己未 [First letter to Xu Xuanhu Zanshan in 1619], SSJ, juan 69, 1a–7b.
277 Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Tang Cunyi Shiyu shu er jiwei” 與唐存憶侍御書二己未 (Second letter to Tang Cunyi Shiyu in 1619), in SSJ, juan 81, 12a; and “Ji Tang Cunyi Zhongcheng shu wu xinyou” 寄唐存憶中丞書五辛酉 (Fifth letter sent to Tang Cunyi Zhongcheng in 1621), SSJ, juan 82, 4a–5a.
himself as a literatus, who due to circumstance and personal interest, has become a military specialist. *Wu bei zhi* is portrayed as a comprehensive, encyclopedic tome, the product of Mao’s efforts to remedy the problems of the state. We will see that the prefaces with which the recipients of these letters respond echo the narrative Mao Yuanyi has already constructed.

### 3.4 The Prefaces: Echo and Response

In their prefaces, the picture painted by Li Weizhen, Gu Qiyuan, Fu Ruzhou, Zhang Shiyi, Lang Wenhuian, and Song Xian is one they borrowed from letters of Mao himself, though each expands part of that narrative to better reinforce Mao’s specialist persona and *Wu bei zhi* as its embodiment. Both the letters quoted above and these prefaces carefully build up Mao’s performed identity and intertwine that identity with *Wu bei zhi*, its contents, format, and his skill at research. We see the same tropes in letter after letter from Mao to his potential prefatory authors, and in the prefaces that accompany the 1621 edition.

As in Mao’s own letters, we generally see prefatory authors begin by establishing the circumstances that necessitate the production of books like *Wu bei zhi* by people like Mao Yuanyi. Li Weizhen’s preface includes a scathing account of the effect of factional politics at court on the defense of Liaodong in the years leading up to the printing of *Wu bei zhi*, and recounts Mao’s anxieties about the circumstances of the state. Despite the relative peace of the late Wanli period, “[Mao] fervently and vehemently thought on how to reorganize the long-term policies [of the dynasty] and dissipate the sprouts of chaos;” however, “Of those who heard him,
some saw him as mad, or considered this excessive talk.”\(^{278}\) Mao’s concerns were soon proved legitimate, Li says, as in the last years of the Wanli reign, Nurhaci attacked, and “Casualties were counted by the mass grave.”\(^{279}\) Li further describes Mao’s frustrations with the scholar gentry class and officialdom’s failure to engage sufficiently with military questions:

Mao’s preface says that there are five reasons the gentry class does not learn about soldiery: when [things look] easy, they are careless; they are narrow-minded and follow only themselves; when shocked, they give up on themselves; they are lazy and get themselves stuck; they are ignorant and entrap themselves. They are stricken by a disease of the fatty deposit around the heart.

\[\text{其自序云：士大夫不習兵之故有五：易而自翫，狹而自用，震而自棄，惰而自窘，昧而自陷，深中膏盲之疾。}\]\(^{280}\)

Li argues that none of the disasters he describes would have happened had anybody listened to Mao’s concerns earlier: “If his ideas had been implemented earlier, they would have taken effect within three years. Could it be that we would then not have been defeated, smeared across the earth to this degree?”\(^{281}\) Here, Li Weizhen has identified a military crisis, and Mao’s frustration with an inadequate literati response. After all, the prefaces argue, literati and their skills were in fact essential to warfare, in particular, the collection of information about the military. Mao will be portrayed as the perfect person to solve this problem, *Wu bei zhi*, the perfect solution.

All of the prefaces for *Wu bei zhi* expend great effort saying that literati are of great value to the state, and that their expertise and wide reading is, in fact, a boon. In particular,

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\(^{278}\) Li Weizhen 李維楨, “*Wu bei zhi xu*” 武備志敍 [Preface to *Treatise on Military Preparedness*], in Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, in XXSK, vol. 963, 1a–b. 「慄慨激烈思所以振長策而銷亂萌。聞者或目為狂抑謂奢闊之談。」

\(^{279}\) *Ibid.*, 1b–2a. 「士馬以澤。」

\(^{280}\) Li Weizhen, “*Wu bei zhi xu*,” in *Wu bei zhi*, 2a–b. The last sentence is a common metaphor for a disease that attacks the body’s internal workings so deeply that it is usually fatal.

\(^{281}\) Li Weizhen, “*Wu bei zhi xu*,” in *Wu bei zhi*, 4. 「令志早行，三年有成，寧渠一敗塗地至此。」
“shusheng,” usually defined as those who read, or sometimes, copyists, or what I have translated as “students,” are not as useless as the self-effacing use of this term would have us think.

*Shusheng* is always a term by which Mao humbles himself when making requests of social superiors (potential patrons), implying that he has achieved nothing in his life so far. But in the prefaces to *Wu bei zhi*, we see the term turned on its head. Not only are literati, generally, essential to the military projects of the state, but *shusheng* in particular are useful. Fu Ruzhou writes in his preface:

> Do not say that these *shusheng* are [merely] discussing issues of the periphery of our state. Alas! How can one see [those whose] eyes do not distinguish territories, whose hands are not intimately familiar with bronze and iron, whose breast does not know military experience as true *shusheng*?

毋曰；若輩書生譚閫外事。於戲！安見不辨方輿、手不親金鐵、胸不知武庫爲真書生哉？

Those who read are not useless, but rather the heroes of this story. In fact, these days, any *shusheng* worth his salt has practical intimacy with weaponry and techniques of warfare. This statement further resolves a tension introduced earlier in the preface between the civil or literary (*wen*) and the military (*wu*) occupations men might take on. He writes: “For every heroic gentleman of a generation, there must be a leading general. Moreover, as for situations where literati led the military, more than half are like Grand Duke Jiang and Guanzi, great masters of letters.”

He proceeds to give historical examples of commanders who were both classically literate and had practicable knowledge of the military.

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283 *Ibid.*, 3a. The original reads: 「且文人領武事者，大半如太公、管子文章鉅公。」
One prefatory author even more directly draws the conclusion that Mao crosses the boundaries between textual expertise and practical expertise. Gu Qiyuan writes: “When he grew up, he set his sights on the four corners of the earth, looked into the distance at all things touched by the affairs of the day. Seeking the advice of his outstanding intellect, swordsmen would come to discuss with him and learn.”\(^{284}\) Gu makes claims for the power of the text of *Wu bei zhi* to save if only people in power would attend to it: “Mao’s book can cause those who discuss it to truly achieve preparedness. One night’s reading can enable them to assist the emperor in planning for war, and [to reach] decisive victory over one thousand *li*.”\(^{285}\) Gu describes Mao as a master of textual knowledge even those with known practical experience (swordsmen) would consult.

Simultaneously, letters from Mao and prefaces from the authors he approaches all draw on Mao’s family history to give his endeavors weight. We have already seen one of the most obvious ways of calling readers’ attention to Mao’s family pedigree in the civil service. Prefaces to *Wu bei zhi* also consistently reiterate the formative influence the careers of his grandfather, Mao Kun, and father, Mao Guojin, had on the expectations others had of Mao Yuanyi. Li Weizhen writes in his preface:

Zhisheng followed his grandfather and his grandfather’s descendants. They held salary and rank in the government. Mao was unconventional and upheld high principles. He didn’t complete his undertakings. For this reason, [Mao] concentrated single-mindedly on the favor of the state, planning for the preparation of the earth before the big storm.

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\(^{284}\) Gu Qiyuan 顧起元, “*Wu bei zhi xu*” 武備志序 [Preface to *Treatise on Military Preparedness*], in *Wu bei zhi*, 2a-b.  「比長而志在四方，蒿目時事所至。訪其奇材，劍客與之討論而肄習。」

\(^{285}\) *Ibid.*, 4a-b.  「討者君之此書令誠得備，乙夜之覽真可以毗贊廟譜決勝千里之外。」
Gu Qiyuan follows with this:

Mr. Mao Zhisheng of Gui’an carried on the legacy of his grandfather, Mr. Lumen, and his father, Mr. Ercen. Additionally, he inherited the mantle of his predecessors, upholding it with literary pursuits in a refined and courteous manner.

Zhang Shiyi also confirms Mao’s family as a noble literati family. He writes, “Zhisheng’s family background is of the highest rank; those who were his intimate friends were all men of repute of his grandfather’s vocation.” The prefaces affirm Mao’s literary pedigree, even if he did not continue with the civil examinations after 1621. They also reiterate his grandfather’s devotion to military studies.

At least one other author of a preface for *Wu bei zhi* buys into Mao’s story about his grandfather’s military proficiency. Fu Ruzhou recapitulates Mao’s revision of the story of Mao Kun’s involvement with Hu Zongxian. He writes:

After this, during the Jiajing period [1521–1567] the coastal regions suffered unfortunate events. The seven provinces were almost inundated. Hu Zongxian distributed money like mud and sand, and ferreted out treacherous men like piglets and mice. Military experts all imitated and employed him. The most skilled, the well known generals Yu [Dayou] and Qi [Jiguang], all came out of the ranks below him. Moreover, Hu Zongxian himself sent memorials of strategy [to the throne], many of which can be traced back to Surveillance Commissioner Mao [Kun]. The current Mao Yuanyi of Fangfeng Village, he is the grandson of [that] Surveillance Commissioner, Mr. [Mao] Lumen [Kun].

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286 Li Weizhen, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” 3b–4a.
287 Gu Qiyuan, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” 1a.
288 Zhang Shiyi, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” 6a–b. 「止生家世鼎貴，所知交皆大父行名下士。」
This rewriting of Mao Kun’s history that conveniently forgets the three times he was dismissed from office, and the one time he was reduced to commoner status, lauds him and thereby his lineage as military geniuses. *Wu bei zhi* therefore comes from a member of a lineage with practical experience in the military, and who was only two steps removed from a personal relationship with many of the experts it quotes.

The prefaces also reiterate Mao’s access to his grandfather’s book collection on military affairs. Some prefatory authors describe the act of compiling *Wu bei zhi* as an act of generosity by which he shared his wealth of books with others.290 Gu’s description of Mao’s generosity provides a starting point to think about exactly what Mao Yuanyi had to give these men in return for their sponsorship and friendship, and the mechanisms through which these relationships were built. Gu writes of Mao’s practice of traveling and sharing books, especially between the two capitals:

Clutching his books, he traveled everywhere within the reach of the two capitals and debated with their worthy gentlemen, one after another, above and below. There was nobody who didn’t want to be friends with him, and he became close with his friends using his broad talents.

挾筴游兩都所至，與其賢士大夫議論相上下，亡不人人，以通材投分與君友。291

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289 Fu Ruzhou, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” 4a–b.

290 See the preface to *Wu bei zhi,* by Gu Qiyuan, especially page 3.

291 Gu Qiyuan, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” 1a–b,
As noted in Chapter 2, Gu writes: “Mao then generously took out the books in his book chest, and by himself categorized and edited that which he had spent a lifetime arranging. Moreover, he guided his friends in his long-term plan.”292 The very act of compiling *Wu bei zhi* was portrayed as one of generosity. *Wu bei zhi* embodies years of Mao’s work and his considerable (personal) library of information. Like in his own letters, the prefaces argue Mao Yuanyi is suited to the task of saving the state via a book because of the resources at his disposal, because of his family history of literary success, and his own erudition.

Li Weizhen describes the printing and circulation of *Wu bei zhi* among the court as Mao’s response to the military disasters in the Northeast. Mao’s doom saying, Li says, finally began to gain attention when backed up by this treatise:

> Those who saw it gradually began to wonder at it. The basic outline of *Wu bei zhi* is in five [parts]: the essentials of the army, strategy, systems of formations and training, logistics, and divination and geography. It contains 180-some entries, with illustrations and explanations. [Between] opportunities from heaven, advantages of geography, and the harmony of the people,293 there is nothing he doesn’t examine carefully, fully, and accurately. It can help to relieve emergencies.

Similar themes are found throughout the other prefaces. For example, Lang Wenhuan’s preface begins by enumerating the myriad ways literature on military systems has been lost and muddied, its transmission disrupted, in the 2,000 years since the mythical Yellow Emperor

292 *Ibid.*, 3a. 「君迺慨然出其篋中書，以生平之所擘畫者，門分戶列，手自排績。且與友人傅君遠度。」

293 The phrase 「天時地利人和」 in this sentence refers to the first entry in the chapter “Gongsun Chou xia” in *Mencius*. For both the text and a translation, see Legge, *The Works of Mencius*, in *The Four Books*, 559.

294 Li Weizhen, “*Wu bei zhi xu,*” in *Wu bei zhi*, 2a–b.
(Huangdi 黃帝). He lauds Mao Yuanyi’s exhaustive reorganizing of 2,000 years worth of texts—a task requiring skill handling texts with complicated histories. Lang, writing in the summer of 1621, comments that upon learning of the defeats at the beginning of the year, he

…rose up and reported this to Master Mao, saying, “Those of learning should put their imitation of the ancients into practice in order to rescue the present. I dare ask about this because of my worry for the state.” My friend Master Mao replied, discouraged, “All my life I have served the state. When I was small I despaired at the weakness of the state, so I studied the learning of the state, and wanted to use it to expand the borderlands and grow the boundaries, [thereby] expressing the far-reaching might of the two founders.”

Mao equates his (military) textual mission with selfless service to the state, and Lang repeats the claim, saying that an expert in military texts like Mao was his first point of contact for ideas for mitigating the peril posed by Manchu armies.

The other prefatory authors follow. Song Xian compares the shallow study of such topics to a wall with a shaky foundation or the flimsy bark of a tree—one need not worry about the wall’s stability until the area is flooded, or the bark until the tree is assaulted by wind and rain. One needs to worry about ‘incomplete’ preparation in case of military disaster, which, of course, was the concern at hand for Mao and his readers in 1621. Study of military topics, here, is the preparation in question. Who can forget Zhang Shiyi’s assertion, quoted in Chapter 2, “The congratulations for victory in war belong not to the plans of the court, but to this scholar of the people on the day this book was declared finished.”


296 Zhang Shiyi 張師繹, “Wu bei zhi xu” 武備志序 [Preface to Wu bei zhi],” in Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, 7b. 「戰勝之賀不在廟謨，而在草澤逢掖此書告成之日矣。」

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All this ink spilt in justification of the value of the study of texts for the execution of war craft causes the reader to question how sincerely literati and military audiences were expected to take these claims. The sheer volume of text devoted to this endeavor belies any confidence its authors might claim in their audience’s willingness to agree with these assertions. If it has to be asserted that textual study begets practical expertise, it is certainly not a commonly held epistemic assumption, but rather, an emerging one. We will continue to see a notion of expertise that involves the application of textual knowledge applied to real life situations explored in letter Mao Yuanyi writes to obtain a position as an adviser or *muyou* to Sun Chengzong.

For all that Mao’s exploits in textual compilation are lauded in these prefaces, it is clear that not all literati readers would have believed that Mao’s foray into the distinctly practical topics of military affairs constituted the legitimate work of a literatus. Both the prefaces and Mao’s letters reaching out to these authors devote considerable attention to reconciling the tension between Mao’s storied family history in the civil service and his own failures to pass even the provincial examinations. Mao sells *Wu bei zhi* as his own way to fulfill the expectations of friends and family in a time when success at the examinations was unlikely. Mao’s situation in both the examination system and outside it was unusual in that he had multi-generational ties to both the civil service and to the military. He draws on these multi-generational ties to produce *Wu bei zhi* and find patrons for his career, simultaneously walking a thin rhetorical tightrope between the martial (*wu*) and the civil (*wen*) and their relative respectability. As Craig Clunas found, practices of exchange with peers and contemporaries re-inscribed these ties, and reinforced relationships with contemporaries. Ultimately this process of re-inscription sculpted a reputation for the book(s) titled “*Wu bei zhi*” and the person called “Mao Yuanyi” or “Mao
Zhisheng,” one that relied equally on textual mastery of the civil and the martial, and the desire to apply that mastery to the protection of the Ming state.

3.5 How to Write a Seventeenth-Century Cover Letter

So far, Mao’s letters and the prefatory responses to them have shaped *Wu bei zhi* as a book, and thereby shaped Mao’s reputation as its compiler. Armed with these relationships as proof of his competence and social self, Mao set out to connect with those who might employ him, a considerably more skeptical audience than his friendly prefatory authors. Between the years 1621 and 1623, Mao Yuanyi approached several people in positions of power in the civil service. Most of his letters provide advice and obliquely or directly request that they act on his behalf or recommend him for a position. Out of the many exchanges Mao saw fit to preserve in his collected writings, four from 1621–1623 catch the eye of a scholar interested in the role of *Wu bei zhi* in Mao’s navigation of the partisan politics of the early 1620s, and the importance of statecraft expertise, textual and practical, to that process. Mao wrote to Minister of Personnel Sun Wei 孫瑋 (j.s. 1577), Minister of War Wang Xiangqian 王象乾 (j.s. 1571), Sun Chengzong 孫承宗 (1563–1638), and Grand Secretary Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1562–1627) simultaneously. The conversations no longer beg prefaces, but rather employment, and refuse employment offered when not to Mao’s tastes. At this point, Mao Yuanyi no longer mentions *Wu bei zhi* but focuses on policy analysis. By the time *Wu bei zhi* is printed, he has managed to successfully associate his name with the text, and must demonstrate that he can apply the knowledge he so carefully collected. In every letter shaping of his public persona, Mao draws on the same themes we’ve seen described to make himself seem useful as an adviser, drawing on intergenerational connections for the right to contact highly placed officials, and rhetoric describing devotion to
the state and statecraft to justify military pursuits as a replacement career after failure in the civil examinations.

Others interested in Wu bei zhi have tracked Mao’s correspondence with Sun Chengzong, and how he came to accept a clerk position with Sun in 1623, cutting short his mourning period for his mother, who died in the 12th month of 1622.297 We know from Mao’s correspondence published in his collected writings that he rejected numerous recommendations to enter the civil service (Zhao Na counts 12) before accepting his role in Sun’s entourage. Zhao Na attributes Mao’s unexpected hesitancy to accept entry into the civil service through the avenue of recommendation to two factors: (1) Mao did not approve of those who had first recommended him; and (2) he could not, at first, stomach the thought of turning from a literatus into a military man.298 Zhao cites writings from the mid-1620s where Mao expresses ambivalence about his decision to take up military service instead of pursuing examination success. In fact, earlier letters to Sun Chengzong and others in power state the relevance of literati to military efforts; the importance of statecraft to the tasks of civil servants; and that Mao Yuanyi was in fact eager to serve on the front lines. Mao’s story opens up opportunities for us to discuss discourses of statecraft and “concrete studies,” discourses that shaped avenues for literati to design their own careers, lives, and interests outside the civil examination system, in this case as members of a retinue of advisers, a mufu.

In Shimin sishi ji, Mao Yuanyi preserves six letters to Wang Xiangqian from 1621, and one from 1622. The first four letters respond to specific situations and, possibly, queries from Wang to Mao on topics of administration and supply for the Ming army. The fifth speaks to the

298 Ibid.
importance of recommendation as an avenue to office in times of crisis. In the first letter, Mao uses the excuse of having witnessed the production of military carts and the inspection of soldiers and horses in Nanjing to provide words of advice to Wang Xiangqian on those topics. In particular, Mao expresses concern that the Ming armies cannot compete with Manchu archers on horseback. The best alternative, he believes, is to provide Ming soldiers with the cover of wagons mounted with artillery to bolster their courage and hinder the Manchu horses.299 The second letter analyzes the use of coal and rations for horses, providing suggestions for making sure the horses end up fattened at the end of ten months, and the soldiers warm.300 The third letter answers a question received from Wang Xiangqian about whether using forges in Chang’an was an expedient use of resources.301 The fourth letter details how to best divvy up farming duties and land in the military with the goal of preserving excess funds for armor, weapons, horses, and the state coffers. Mao speaks to personal observations in the Beizhili area.302 The fifth letter is notably different in tone. Having demonstrated his familiarity with the mechanisms for funding, feeding and arming a military force, Mao proceeds to a more delicate topic: that of the three most common paths to office: exams, a career as a tribute student, and recommendation.

In fact, most of the fifth letter meditates on historical precedents for the use of the recommendation system: primarily, the speedy hiring of people of unusual talent in times of crisis. Mao Yuanyi explicitly states that in the time since Liaodong has been troubled by the rise of the Manchus, the civil examinations have not produced enough men of talent to deal with the problem. Recommendation was therefore necessary in this moment. Mao Yuanyi writes of two earlier Ming officials, Wu Yubi 吳與弼 (1391–1469) and Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428–1500), both of whom were recommended:

[They] had a great reputation throughout the world, but could not redeem the failures of their time. The examination candidates led each other to condemn them. After this those who were recommended were few. People knew that these two men had come to office by way of being recommended, but did not know how they had stoppered up the road of recommendation.

擁天下之盛名而不能救一時之極敝。科舉之士相率而詆之。而此後薦舉者遂罕。人知二子以薦舉起家，而不知二子所以塞薦舉之路也。303

He then goes on to describe how the Jiajing emperor worried about this situation and so promoted the use of all three paths to office, but the call for recommendations garnered no response. Obliquely referencing his own work compiling Wu bei zhi and then pursuing recommendation, Mao writes: “These past hundred years, each one who was recommended was a scholar of broad learning who compiled and edited works to the best of their ability, but could not publish their innermost thoughts to cleverly bolster the world. So, these people gave up.”304

He does not want to be seen as one of those people that shamelessly pursue office, he says, but he notes that there is a problem with the Ming dynasty’s system of relying primarily on the civil examinations: the three years in between examinations meant that state-level problems would already have passed by the time a new class could graduate, not to mention the myriad things that could happen to an official’s career in the space of three years. It would be better, Mao argues, to follow the barbarian custom of appointing military officers over the heads of the Provincial Administration Commissioner (junshou 郡守), but the people fulfilling the positions of military officers were all lowly, drafted, military men—one would have to make special recommendations (exceptions) in order to fill several tens of positions.\(^{305}\) Mao writes that on this score, he has collaborated with Song Xian (one of the prefatory authors to Wu bei zhi) on a two pronged policy proposal that they would like to bring before the officials in the Ministry of War. They put it in Wang Xiangqian’s capable hands. Mao goes on to detail their thoughts on the recruitment of crack troops. Mao has basically, in this letter, made an argument for exactly the kind of appointment that he is offered from another correspondent, Sun Wei, as a Regional Commander (fujiang 副將), one he eventually refuses (more on this story later). Mao argues that Wang Xiangqian need only order such a thing, and it will be done with great expediency—

\(^{305}\) Here Mao argues that the time between civil examination periods was too long to guarantee a sufficient supply of competent officers. The military examinations would have been similarly problematic, as they were often carried out in conjunction with the civil examinations. See Elman, *A Cultural History of the Civil Examinations*, 137n37. The military examination system was paired with a military school system, neither of which were generally considered to have produced excellent commanders. Examination candidates were not generally appointed to important positions. See Lai Mengqi, “Mingdai de wuxue yu wuju zhidu,” 193–210. Literati like Mao would not have bothered taking part in such exams themselves, as graduates were consistently considered lower status than civil examination candidates. See Fang, “Literati Statecraft and Military Resistance During the Ming-Qing Transition,” 103.
meanwhile a lowly youth like himself “can only look forward longingly to achieving a reputation in the capital from his hometown.”

Mao never directly requests a position from Wang Xiangqian, but he discusses, at length, in his sixth letter, why he chose to refuse an offer by Sun Wei to lead approximately 6,000 troops in the area of Nanjing. His concern, as expressed in the sixth letter, is that it would be a cushy, civil position of which he is unworthy. Having not been a civil examination success like so many others in his family (seven in the last generation alone, he says), he cannot take up a position that does not ask him to don armor and go to the front lines. “If I were to be made an official,” he says, “then the Hanlin Academy would be no better than your average joes!” He argues forcefully that he cannot conscientiously take up a easy position away from the army camps in the Northeast when 70 and 80-year-old men are so willing to endure them. He writes,

[I just hope that] of the official places that Sun Zhongzai [Wei] plans [for me], one will be part of the front ranks, exchanging safety for danger and ease for labor. Perhaps indeed it is [only] the hearts of the stupid that are inspired by [this] world. Only you, sir, do not treasure [the opportunity] to report to my ruler. I rely on you, sir, to reciprocate the imperial favor [bestowed on me], and on public documents to report my personal opinions.

儀不望明公踐宿諾加大將，即以孫冡宰見擬之官一當前伍，移安爲危，移逸爲勞。或亦愚人之心而天下之所亮也。唯明公不惜入告吾君。元儀藉明公以酬國恩，藉公事以報私知。

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307 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Wang Jiyu Zhifu shu liu renxu” 上王霽宇制府書六壬戌 [Sixth letter submitted to Wang Jiyu Zhifu in 1622], SSJ, juan 66, 8b–9a. 「使以官也，則木天金馬未嘗絕人。」Mutian 木天 and jinma 金馬 are both references to the Hanlin Academy. In this letter, Mao writes of 6,000 troops when referencing the Nanjing position. In his letter to Sun Wei, he cites the number 5,400. See below, page 54.

Mao asks for Wang to speak on his behalf, not necessarily to request a civil position, but to urge others of similar rank to consider him for front line positions where he might put the practical knowledge he has so carefully demonstrated in epistles to good use. By demonstrating his knowledge of civil and military policy, Mao shapes an “expert” persona for himself.

Mao Yuanyi’s letters to Sun Wei are far less numerous than those to the other three individuals named above; however they are a useful place to examine both Mao’s reasons for refusing positions offered by such men, and his belief in the importance of concrete expertise for civil officials. Mao preserves two letters to Sun Wei. In his first letter from 1622, Mao refuses the position Sun Wei has offered him commanding 5,400 troops in Nanjing. He says that he “dare not” take up the position of Regional Commander. He is not nearly as straightforward in his letter to Sun Wei as he was in his letters to Wang Xiangqian regarding his desire to be in the front lines. Always, his refusals are couched in language of his own unworthiness to take on a position for which there are more worthy available civil officials. Mao then goes on to give very specific advice about filling the position Sun Wei seeks to fill and about the organization of the troops underneath the person Sun will eventually appoint. Mao demonstrates his competence even as he claims ignorance. Furthermore, Mao mentions the letters he has written to Sun Chengzong and Ye Xianggao detailing how best to manage personnel in the army. Sun Chengzong, he says, has already implemented half of his suggestions, and Ye Xianggao has listened, but this was not enough to remedy the situation in the Northeast. Mao directs Sun Wei, not to other experts, but to his own writings on this precise topic, and implies familiarity with other men high in the civil service (Sun Chengzong and Ye Xianggao). Mao Yuanyi’s second letter to Sun Wei comes in 1623 after 45 days in the field with Sun Chengzong, and is a
congratulatory note on Sun Wei’s recent promotion.\footnote{For the first letter, see Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Sun Lanshi Mengzai shu yi renxu” 上孫藍石冡宰書一壬戌 [First letter submitted to Sun Lanshi Mengzai in 1622], SSJ, juan 66, 10a–11b. For the second, “Shang Sun Lanshi Mengzai shu er guihai” 上孫藍石冡宰書二癸亥 [Second letter submitted to Sun Lanshi Mengzai in 1623], SSJ, juan 66, 11b–12b.} Here, Mao portrays himself as an expert whose advice is listened to in more important circles than the recipient’s, even as he “humbly” refuses the position.

In contrast to the simple letters to Sun Wei rejecting an offer, but buttressing his own expertise in the matter of personnel management, letters to Sun Chengzong communicate far more. This chapter has so far lingered on the rhetoric used in letters and prefaces, but Mao Yuanyi’s letters to Sun Chengzong allow summary of the communication practices that Mao used to carve a space for himself to work in the Ming military. Mao preserves eight letters to Sun Chengzong from 1622–1630. In 1621, Sun Chengzong held the position of Left Mentor to the heir apparent and lecturer in the Classics Colloquium (held seasonally with the Emperor). Censor Fang Zhenru 方震孺 (1585–1645) suggested Sun Chengzong as a replacement for the Minister of War, Cui Jingrong 崔景榮 (1559–1631), in the same year, but the emperor was loathe to give up Sun’s input at court and didn’t permit the promotion.\footnote{Zhang Tingyu, Mingshi, lie zhan 列傳 138, juan 250, 6465–6466.} Mao Yuanyi’s 1621 letter to Sun explains his refusal of offers he has received, such as Sun Wei’s, and argues that Sun Chengzong’s talents are wasted in his current position as a lecturer at court. Mao Yuanyi writes that the state of affairs in Liaodong would be far better off were Sun Chengzong to be appointed to a generalship.
It wouldn’t be until 1622 that Sun would be appointed Minister of War and Grand Secretary of the Eastern Pavilion.\textsuperscript{311} At this juncture Mao Yuanyi writes Sun to congratulate him on his promotion, now addressing him as Minister Duke (\textit{xianggong 相公}), a form of address reserved for grand secretaries. Mao Yuanyi writes that he has renewed faith in the possibility of regaining Liaodong with Sun in charge. In fact, he writes,

If little old me were to dare enter the pass\textsuperscript{312} as a literatus, Heaven most certainly would not tolerate this. So I stayed, hermitted away in Baixia [near Nanjing], hearing of the latest defeats. I prayed silently, only hoping for one person to come along and pacify the state. But you, sir, have now come along [and filled the position of] Minister of War and Grand Secretary. I would give body and soul [to the state], indeed, that is, to attain office in a time of good government, how much more so would I pursue an opportune moment, where arms might cleanse the shame of the four failures of the last three reigns, in order to repay you, sir, on this day?

Here we have the first subtle request that Sun Chengzong consider calling Mao Yuanyi to serve in a military capacity outside the usual realm of a literatus. Mao’s third letter to Sun is also from 1622, and contains more of the same congratulations on Sun’s promotion; a lengthy discussion of Sun’s own memorials to the throne; and a summary of four detailed suggestions on the management of the army. The first deals with the distribution of authority between civil and military officials—Mao argues that civil and military officials need to be brought together and have their goals united. While he would not advocate taking control of military finances away

\textsuperscript{311} \textit{Ibid., lie zhuan 138, juan 250, 6465–6466.}
\textsuperscript{312} Referring to the areas beyond the Great Wall.
\textsuperscript{313} Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Sun Gaoyang xianggong shu er renxu” 上孫高陽相公書二壬戌 [Second letter submitted to Sun Gaoyang Xianggong in 1622], SSJ, \textit{juan} 61, 2b–3a.
from civil officials, he does advocate better understanding between the two roles and less discrimination against military officers.\textsuperscript{314} I read this as a plug for his own specialty—a classically literate literatus with expert knowledge of military affairs, readily applied to specific situations.

It is in the fourth letter, written in 1622, that Mao Yuanyi begins to beg for a job. The request comes in the second half of the letter. The first half, like in the third letter, comments at length on Sun Chengzong’s activities with the army, and Sun’s most recent memorials to the throne. Mao writes of the refused position offered by Sun Wei, and says that only Sun Chengzong, with whom he had exchanged poetry, could fulfill his desire to work on the front lines.\textsuperscript{315} “I am a most humble literatus. Yet, I pillow my head on weapons, waiting for the dawn, contemplating avenging the state. You, sir, indeed have known this a long while.”\textsuperscript{316} The fifth letter, also from 1622, turns to direct discussion with Sun Chengzong about his strategy in the Northeast. The sixth repeats Mao’s discontent with any position that would keep him in the safety of Nanjing.\textsuperscript{317} Mao doesn’t preserve any further communications with Sun Chengzong from these two years, but the next letter in the sequence, from 1625, recounts an exchange of poetry and an offer of employment from Sun Chengzong. He writes that, in Sun’s camp, “I

\textsuperscript{314} Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Sun Gaoyang xianggong shu san renxu” 上孫高陽相公書三壬戌 [Third letter submitted to Sun Gaoyang Xianggong in 1622], \textit{SSJ, juan 61}, 3a–7b.

\textsuperscript{315} Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Sun Gaoyang xianggong shu si renxu” 上孫高陽相公書四壬戌 [Fourth letter submitted to Sun Gaoyang Xianggong in 1622], \textit{SSJ, juan 61}, 7b–10b.

\textsuperscript{316} \textit{Ibid.}, 8a–b. 「元儀最賤士也。然枕戈待旦思報國仇。相公亦知之久矣。」

scrupulously abided by my job, as recommended officials were already too numerous. And you, my teacher, steadfastly articulated your thinking, so I would not have regretted dying in the vanguard.”318 So it was that Mao Yuanyi sought out and found a position for himself: he demonstrated knowledge of policy and current events, the social skills of a literatus, and military literacy.

Mao Yuanyi’s letters contain identifiable practices of social intercourse in this period used in the pursuit of employment. The first is the dispatch of multiple letters, even if (especially if) the recipient does not initially respond. Second, these letters must demonstrate that the author possesses intimate knowledge of the political struggles of the day, and expert knowledge of the technical details of administration related to the position of the recipient. The author strives to make himself useful to the recipient and demonstrate social and expert competence, all the while angling for the kind of position he wants. In Mao’s case this meant emphasizing practical expertise and action, and a willingness to give his life for the survival of the dynasty. These attributes sold him as perfect for service on the front lines in a capacity which would require someone with both a mastery of literary forms of exchange and military affairs, but rendered him unsuited for positions in the interior. Mao frames positions in the interior, or positions with less access to the front lines, as those appropriate to the talents of someone who had truly mastered the civil service examinations. He excuses himself from this kind of service on the grounds of his own unworthiness. However, a position on the front lines would lend itself to contacts with

318 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Sun Gaoyang Xianggong shu qi yichou” 上孫高陽相公書七乙丑 [Seventh letter submitted to Sun Gaoyang Xianggong in 1625], SSJ, juan 62, 3b–7b. 循分衡才已爲過矣。及老師堅廓清之念，而儀不敢惜死以當前。’
movers and shakers of strategy and put Mao in a position to keep well placed contacts in the
capital city informed.

In a tense exchange with Ye Xianggao, Mao employs the same epistolary practices to
pursue a position. He simultaneously receives an invitation to work for Sun Chengzong. We see
friction arise between the expectations of long-time family friends and Mao’s desire to be well
placed in a time of military crisis. In a series of twelve letters spanning 1621–1624, Mao draws
on Ye’s intimate friendship with his late father, Mao Guojin, to ask for assistance finding a
position despite his failure in the civil examinations. In a buried eulogy (muzhiming 墓志銘)
written for Mao Guojin, Ye Xianggao records that it was Mao Yuanyi who asked him for this
service. In Mao’s first letter, he recalls serving Ye Xianggao during Ye’s first term as grand
secretary ten years prior to this letter.319 The letters Mao Yuanyi preserves do not record a blind
introduction to Ye Xianggao, but rather a reintroduction to a man who had not seen him in a
decade.

The first letter of five from 1621 expresses Mao’s happiness to see Ye serving as a grand
secretary again, and muses at length on the role of the grand secretary, praising Ye’s navigation
of perilous political terrain at the mercy of the always-dangerous eunuch factions.320 The second
letter urges Ye to choose between first settling the affairs of a fractious court, or first dealing
with the threats posed by outside forces. He analyzes the personal enmity between military
officials in the Northeast, and counsels leniency in the case of the borderline-treasonous Mao

319 Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Ye Fuqing xianggong shu yi xinyou” 上葉福清相公書一辛酉 [First letter submitted to Ye
   Fuqing Xianggong in 1621], SSJ, juan 57, 1a.
320 Ibid., 1a–8b.
Wenlong (1576–1629).\textsuperscript{321} The third letter to Ye analyzes the twin military disasters of rebellions in the Southwest and invasion from the Northeast, and attributes the dynasty’s difficulties to problems of recruitment and supply.\textsuperscript{322} The fourth letter drops hints that his last letter to Ye was not delivered because it contained too much sensitive information, implying that Mao himself is well informed. It continues to provide counsel to Ye on the merits of remaining in office or resigning in the current factional climate of court.\textsuperscript{323} By the fifth letter, Mao Yuanyi finally gets around to the meat of his question. After discussing at length how to deal with the complicated politics of generals in the Northeast (Xiong Tingbi 熊廷弼, Yuan Chonghuan 袁崇煥, and Mao Wenlong), he writes that he has given up on the civil examinations in the face of his latest failure, but he cannot bear to stand by and watch the world burn. He obliquely asks, can Ye Xianggao, out of love for Mao Yuanyi’s family, not help?\textsuperscript{324}

\textsuperscript{321} For an analysis of the argument at court and between generals on the front lines in the late 1610s and early 1620s and between court civil officials, see Kenneth M. Swope, “Postcards from the edge: Competing strategies for the defense of Liaodong in the Late Ming,” 144–171. The primary argument was between those who favored a defensive stance, and those who favored an offensive stance. Mao Yuanyi writes extensively on this issue and on the fall of Ningyuan. For the second letter to Ye Xianggao, see Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Ye Fuqing xianggong shu er xinyou” 上葉福清相公書二辛酉 [Second letter submitted to Ye Fuqing Xianggong in 1621], SSJ, juan 57, 8b–13b.

\textsuperscript{322} Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Ye Fuqing xianggong shu san xinyou” 上葉福清相公書三辛酉 [Third letter submitted to Ye Fuqing Xianggong in 1621], SSJ, juan 58, 1a–7a.

\textsuperscript{323} Mao Yuanyi, “Shang Ye Fuqing xianggong shu si xinyou” 上葉福清相公書四辛酉 [Fourth letter submitted to Ye Fuqing Xianggong in 1621], SSJ, juan 58, 7a–9a.

In 1623, Mao eventually agreed to take up service as an adviser under Sun Chengzong. Ye’s response was less than enthused, his first reaction being to gently suggest to Mao Yuanyi that it must be difficult for someone of an esteemed literati household to demean himself by serving in such a position. In fact, Ye expresses polite unwillingness to assist in obtaining the position, suggesting that Mao consult Sun Chengzong himself, and in another letter suggests a number of reasons that what Sun has asked of Mao is so difficult. Ye also expresses that it would be good for Mao to continue mourning his recently deceased mother, implying that interrupting that process for the offered position would be impolitic. However, we do know that Mao did, in fact, accept Sun’s proposal, and for the rest of his career was more or less in office when Sun was, and disgraced when Sun was disgraced.

It does not take long for Ye Xianggao, as he began to receive letters from Mao describing the situation in Shanhai Pass and along the northern frontier, to request information from Mao in return for details regarding quarrels between personnel to which only Mao would have been privy. Ye makes use of Mao’s position but retains the right to disapprove. He writes,

I’ve had a report from the regional office of the Military Commissioner saying that the western barbarians have a mutual animosity with Nurhaci’s [people], having killed and injured each other, and Nurhaci lost one of his sons. I don’t know if this is so or not. The military farming outside the pass [i.e. Great Wall], some believe it is enough to cover the [necessary] protection, some think it will benefit only the bandits. You, being among them, must have some insight, this would be of some help in addressing this affair. However Commander Sun intends to treat you, let me know. It would be most convenient for you to be an adviser of some sort, taking up a civil position. I don’t know what he intends.

326 Ye Xianggao 葉向高, “Da Mao Zhisheng” 答茅止生 [Answering Mao Zhisheng], in Cangxia cao wen ji, juan 6, 14a–b; juan 8, 5a.
Ye’s letters convey his reluctance for Mao to take up an explicitly military position, if only for the sake of his family’s reputation. Ye’s reluctance to sponsor Mao might extend to reluctance to trust a crucial military office to a man with no prior experience in either a military or civil position.\textsuperscript{329} Mao pays lip service to doubts on this score in his memorial refusing office in 1621 when he first completed \textit{Wu bei zhi} and was offered adviser positions by multiple officials. He wrote, “Because it was not his place to offer the position, I forcefully refused,” and “I, this mere student, am not familiar with the stratagems thought up in military tents, and so forcefully refused and did not go.”\textsuperscript{330} Even if these doubts were not sincere, as suggested by the many letters here in which Mao writes that he wished to serve in a military capacity, the tension between \textit{wen} and \textit{wu} existed in discourse and social practice, and Mao had to shape an identity that straddled both.

3.6 Conclusion

There is perhaps more to be said about Mao and Ye’s discussions of whether or not the military strategy to protect the northern borders should be aggressive or defensive, which neatly

\textsuperscript{328} Ye Xianggao, “Da Mao Zhisheng” 答茅止生 [Answering Mao Zhisheng], in \textit{Cang xia cao wen ji}, \textit{juan} 8, 24b–25a. Emphasis added. This is the second of two letters by the same name.

\textsuperscript{329} See footnote 144.

\textsuperscript{330} Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, “Ci zhao yong shu” 辭召用書 [Letter refusing summons to office], in \textit{SSJ}, \textit{juan} 1, 1b, 2a.

「臣以處非其據力辭」，and 「臣本書生不諳帷幄之謀俱力辭不赴」。
parallel disagreements between military and civil officials dealing with border defense.\textsuperscript{331} How is it that two literati, a civil official and a failed examinee, negotiated the need for knowledge of both \textit{wen} and \textit{wu}, between knowledge of texts, and knowledge of praxis? Kai Filipiak has argued that Ming civil officials and increasingly literate military officials, in addition to their mutual interest in military culture and art noted by Kathleen Ryor,\textsuperscript{332} produced a great number of military treatises, creating a flowering and “refinement” of military strategy and practice in the late Ming.\textsuperscript{333} As noted above, Wang Hung-tai agrees that the military writings and the practice of martial arts were important social activities of urban elites, especially in Nanjing.\textsuperscript{334} Filipiak’s work argues that cooperation between military officers trained secondarily in the education civil officials received and civil officials who had made a secondary study of military affairs produced an effective combination in the sixteenth century, though this perhaps falls apart by the time Mao enters the picture.

Despite what might have been an effective cooperation between military and civil officials in the sixteenth century, it is hard to escape the fact that Ye Xianggao, a Grand Secretary, arguably the highest placed civil official in 1621, and Mao, a supplicant for his influence, both indicated discomfort with Mao’s inexperience. A tension existed between literary expertise and practical expertise. Was practical knowledge, once turned into a format legible to

\textsuperscript{331} See Swope, “Postcards from the edge: Competing strategies for the defense of Liaodong in the Late Ming,” 144–171.

\textsuperscript{332} Ryor, “\textit{Wen} and \textit{Wu} in Elite Cultural Practice during the Late Ming,” 219–242. David Robinson’s work on the culture of the martial in the Ming should be noted here too. See Robinson, and \textit{Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China} (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001) and \textit{Martial Spectacles of the Ming Court} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2013).

\textsuperscript{333} Filipiak, “The Effects of Civil Officials Handling Military Affairs in Ming Times,” 1–15.

literati readers, a legitimate means of demonstrating authority? To twelve civil office holders between 1621 and 1623, Mao’s production of a statecraft resource for the classically literate was sufficient to demand his assistance in at least an ad hoc capacity.  

The submission of Wu bei zhi to a circle of friends in 1621 and its collection alongside the texts it quotes in contemporary libraries lead us to see it as a political object long before it is submitted to the Chongzhen Emperor (r. 1628–1644) upon his ascent to the throne. In fact, Mao makes both himself and his book into political objects. It is clear from Mao’s letters to prefatory writers and potential patrons that there were certain accepted practices for doing so. Mao circulated the preface and table of contents of his book to potential prefatory authors; he directly requested prefaces; he demonstrated intimate knowledge of the working of military supply and personnel management to potential patrons via letter; he also demonstrated a working knowledge of current events and the hazards of bureaucracy; he performed devotion to both literati pursuits and the state; and he bemoaned his own ineptitude at the usual literati knowledge necessary for the civil examinations. He demonstrated enough social competence to exchange poetry with high ranking civil servants like Sun Chengzong. He demonstrated how he might make himself useful as a military expert and intermediary between the frontlines and politicians at court. These practices carved a space for Mao to earn a living practicing concrete knowledge of military pursuits.

Readers familiar with Mao Yuanyi’s story will know that it does not end happily. Regardless of his success in the 1620s, he spent his career careening in and out of office, dependent on the sponsorship of Sun Chengzong, who, in turn, ran afoul of men opposing the

\[335\] Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi yanjiu,” 9.
Donglin faction in Beijing in the 1620s. If we were to examine other parts of the archive Mao left behind, we would see a diversity of “selves,” some more obviously curated than others. Mao portrayed himself as a friend and confidant, a poet, a devoted husband, a morally upright Donglin partisan, and a grieving father, among other things. However, if Mao’s posthumous reputation as crafted by his friends is any indication, it was Mao’s practices of letter writing and performance of his expertise that were most lasting and coherent. What we know of Mao from an outsider’s perspective is largely from the one surviving biography by a contemporary, Qian Qianyi. In it, Mao Yuanyi was the man who wrote Wu bei zhi, who loved to study military affairs, who was a decent hand at poetry, and had three beautiful wives. He was otherwise annoying, and only had about three close friends. He was that one person who was always harping on about the subject he was most passionate about, to the point where others were exhausted by it. Wu bei zhi was an integral component of the “Mao Yuanyi” that would be remembered, and so too would the book be remembered as a lasting embodiment of its compiler’s will. Qian’s biography wraps the loose threads of Mao Yuanyi’s “dividual self,” tightly together and preserves them for posterity. The poet, literatus, patriot, oddball, and most importantly military expert cohere as a single person.

Mao’s story from 1619 to 1623 exemplifies the social practices of a literatus who sought employment outside the civil bureaucracy in a government-adjacent capacity. Some people, like Ye Xianggao, thought Mao’s interests inappropriate to his station and family status. But,

336 “Sun Chengzong zhuan” 孫承宗傳 [Biography of Sun Chengzong], in Chen Ding 陳鼎, Donglin lie zhuan 東林列傳 [Donglin biographies], juan 6.
regardless, Mao used text and the rhetoric of concrete studies and statecraft to carve himself a space in increasingly difficult political circumstances. The letters Mao wrote to solicit prefaces for *Wu bei zhi* effectively drew on intergenerational networks of patronage and friendship to build one facet of Mao Yuanyi’s “dividual self,” one that was recognized and valued by both the state and members of his network. The letters Mao wrote after the printing of *Wu bei zhi* deployed his knowledge of military policy and his classical literacy to portray himself as a classically literate military expert. The prefaces to *Wu bei zhi* repeated this narrative. In doing so, they cause it to cohere as an embodiment of Mao’s expertise. This expertise was defined by both the mastery of texts, and the ability to apply that knowledge to contemporary policy. The next chapter turns to Mao’s printed punctuation in *Wu bei zhi* where he again shows an eye for how one might transform textual knowledge into embodied practice.
Chapter 4: Punctuating *Wu bei zhi*: Reading in Time and Space

In *Of Stigmatology: Punctuation as Experience*, Peter Szendy argues that the function of punctuation is to re-inscribe the experience of reading and thereby the experience of the self in the moment of reading. Szendy refers to “stigmatology” instead of “punctuation” so as to include both “the strict sense” of punctuation, as in the marks that divide text into units, and all the ways of using space, commentary, and other features on the page to curate the reading experience.³³⁸ This broad sense of the word “punctuation” will be used in this chapter to help account for all the ways commentarial practices, spacing, and punctuation practices strive to stabilize meaning in *Wu bei zhi*. Szendy writes that the act of punctuating is an effort to stabilize meaning, but it also causes meanings to “explode” into pluralities. Punctuation guides the reader to one conclusion, but simultaneously opens room for debate.³³⁹ Punctuation attempts to identify which of those possibilities is most important to the reader. Punctuation in *Wu bei zhi* points to a particular meaning for each piece of punctuated text—what Mao-as-reader might have understood—but it therefore implies the possibility of other meanings. Because the meanings produced by the punctuating and reading of texts in a compilation like *Wu bei zhi* are inherently plural, I will not attempt to offer a holistic interpretation of Mao Yuanyi’s commentary and punctuation as an

³³⁹ This is implied by the conclusions of Szendy, 60, where he explains Hegel’s interpretation of the “here” and “now.” As a reader is told to pause in a particular place, the reader then implicitly considers the possibility of not doing so, when an observer points at an object, then moves, the object is no longer in the same position relative to the reader. Likewise, in *Wu bei zhi*, when punctuation points to a specific meaning, the reader is implicitly invited to consider alternatives. The preservation of a plurality of meanings is a fundamental characteristic of encyclopedism. See for example, Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions*, or Elias Muhanna citing Jason König and Greg Woolf, “Introduction,” 1–20. See Muhanna, *The World in a Book*, 11–12. See also Blair, *Too Much to Know*; or Siebert, “Making Technology History,” 253–282.
expression of his “military thought.” Rather, I will offer an analysis of his punctuation, commentarial, and formatting practices across the genres and texts included in Wu bei zhi, asking how they function as a flexible system in a technical text.

Using Szendy’s definition, this chapter understands the punctuation and “eyebrow commentary” (meipi 眉批) in Wu bei zhi as a performative record of Mao Yuanyi’s reading experience. Handwritten punctuation and marginalia pinpoint the act of creation of meaning by a reader at a certain time. For the reader of Wu bei zhi, punctuation and commentary could be evidence that the compiler had in fact encountered and interpreted each piece of text. The punctuation and eyebrow commentary in early editions of Wu bei zhi are claimed by Mao Yuanyi as his own, but are printed, not handwritten, and therefore not the product of in-the-moment reactions to a text, but the product of extensive reading, re-reading, and revision with an audience in mind. Martin Huang characterizes such commentators for novels (xiaoshuo 小說) as an “authorized reader” or “privileged reader” who felt they had special access to the original intentions of the authors of a text, and would try to control readings of the text. This conceptualization works well for how Mao Yuanyi envisioned his work as an encyclopedist. As

340 This has been done elsewhere. See, for example, Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi yanjiu,” chapter 4; Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi yu Sunzi bingfa;” Jiang Na, “Mao Yuanyi yu Wu bei zhi.”
341 “Eyebrow commentary” refers to comments printed in the blank space above the main text of a page.
342 On handwritten punctuation on examination papers as proof that an examiner had read and understood the examinee’s arguments, see Chu, “Interpretations of Rejected Papers in the Late Imperial Civil Service Examinations,” 175.
343 Huang has characterized the position of a commentator as “paradoxical,” that of an “authorized” reader whose reading is “privileged” above others because it correctly interprets the intention of the author. As the commentator’s reading of the text was raised above others, so too was the goal of uncovering the original author’s intention. Huang locates late-Ming emphasis on the reader in the genre of critical commentaries on novels. Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader in Traditional Chinese Xiaoshuo Commentary.” 46–49, 66–67.
modern readers, we cannot perhaps access Mao’s intentions, but we can assess the collective effects of his punctuation and commentarial praxis or the effects of his performance as a competent reader. These practices will be the focus of this chapter.

The interlocking practices that will be analyzed here can be divided into three general categories. First, *Wu bei zhi* employs five kinds of emphasis mark or punctuation, spacing, and marginal commentary to help the reader make sense of the text. The explanatory notes (*fanli* 凡例) at the beginning of *Wu bei zhi* list the five kinds of punctuation mark along with their meanings. The list reads as follows:

1. Hollow circles indicate subtle passages (乃微妙處).
2. Hollow tick marks\footnote{“Tick mark” refers to the Chinese punctuation mark, *dunhao* 頓號 (·). In modern Chinese punctuation, this mark is used to separate items in a list. It was used for a variety of purposes in pre-modern writings. Hilde De Weerdt has used this translation. De Weerdt, *Competition over Content*, 161.} indicate critically important passages (乃緊關處).
3. Hollow, long lines indicate phrases that summarize a section (乃一篇綱領).
4. Solid lines separate sections and topics (乃分段條目).
5. Solid tick marks indicate enigmatic passages (乃隱微處)\footnote{Qiao Na gives a brief analysis of these punctuation marks. Qiao argues that items marked “subtle” (*weimiao* 微妙) are those which Mao believed to be “core content, those things worth savoring and grasping their subtlety.” Critically important passages (*jinguan chu* 緊關處), Qiao says were “most worth paying attention to;” “summary passages” were “central to a particular passage or sentence,” and argues that “enigmatic passages” were simply for marking grammatical breaks (*judou* 句讀). See Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* tanxi,” 40–42. Some of these assertions I will disagree with below, but more important is the lack of holistic analysis of how these marks work in conjunction with eyebrow commentary, interlinear commentary, and spacing to form a coherent system.}

This page can be seen in Figure 1. A key to how this punctuation is represented in quotations in this chapter can be found in Table 2 at the end of this chapter. Though not
described as such here, black dots or hollow circles are also used to mark both dependent and independent clauses—pauses in the language. Secondly, *Wu bei zhi* employs “eyebrow commentary” for both explication and commentary, which will be key in piecing together the meaning of the five punctuation marks. Lastly, spacing, such as column divisions, indentations, and other blank space also serves as a kind of punctuation making the text more legible.

In *Wu bei zhi*, printed commentary, punctuation, and spacing play off one another to produce meaning that makes the entirety of the text of *Wu bei zhi* legible in a certain space and time, but simultaneously contribute to a proliferation of sometimes contradictory concerns and render individual points of “importance” equally unimportant.\(^{346}\) On first reading *Wu bei zhi*, after slogging through unpunctuated Chinese texts, the plethora of notation is refreshing to a modern reader. But absence quickly turns to overabundance. What sense does the punctuation of *Wu bei zhi* help the late-Ming reader make if the result is that each piece of marked text (and most of it *is* marked) is significant? The whole of the text could be rendered less coherent by reducing it to the sum of infinitesimal important pieces, summaries, and clever phrases. Rather than highlighting the most “important” passages in its 240 chapters, the punctuation in *Wu bei zhi* sorts pieces of text into different categories of information: the subtle or profound, the important, summaries, and the obscure.

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\(^{346}\) Szendy raises another problem with practices of punctuation relevant to making sense of the collective punctuation practices in *Wu bei zhi*. He writes, “Punctuating amounts to making or letting the infinitesimal proliferate until it sucks the life out of the whole.” Szendy, *Of Stigmatology*, 40. Szendy bases this observation on Friedrich Nietzsche’s views on Richard Wagner’s practice of phrasing music, which he characterizes as follows: “But the danger of an invasion of the sphere of music by the theatricality of the actor is doubled for Nietzsche by another danger, it too tied to phrasing: that punctuation would make all the minor details equally significant—and thus, in the end, insignificant.” See page 39.
These categories are named in Mao Yuanyi’s explanatory notes, each category assigned to an individual mark, but these categories are mutually constructed. They make sense only relative to other categories and in the context of how these marks are deployed relative to the eyebrow commentary. This set of punctuation and commentarial practices does not produce a single, coherent system of “military thought.” Instead, some of the coherence of Wu bei zhi lies in the coherence of its punctuation practices. Across the entire text, what precisely is consistent about the ways punctuation marks, commentary and spacing were employed? I will argue that individual pieces of information are evaluated and marked based upon their perceived applicability to present circumstance and their place in the textual world within which Mao Yuanyi and his readers operated.347 While the punctuation marks vary slightly in their use across each of the five main sections of Wu bei zhi, Mao Yuanyi’s practices of “emphatic punctuation” cohere in their common aim: to extract pieces of information that are essential to understanding how military theory and practices of earlier times could be applied in the time and space of the late Ming dynasty. This punctuation system was idiosyncratic to Mao Yuanyi, but not entirely out of place in the context of punctuation and commentarial practices of the time, wherein “authorized readers” performed their expert reading through printed critical marks and commentary. In the context of statecraft and technical compendia, Mao’s use of punctuation and commentary to propose and explain the application of textual knowledge in practice provides further evidence of a notion of expertise already identified in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

347 Qiao Na has noted Mao Yuanyi’s preoccupation with applying his knowledge to the Ming in his eyebrow commentary. Qiao separates meipi into five categories, one of which is “affairs relevant to the current dynasty” (benchao shiyi 本朝事宜). Qiao comments that Mao’s frequent discussions of current affairs display his concern for statecraft. Qiao’s analysis does not connect the five categories of eyebrow commentary with punctuation or further theorize their purpose. More will be said below on Qiao’s work with eyebrow commentary. See Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi tanxi,” 45–47.
This chapter first establishes the vocabulary used to refer to this form of critical punctuation throughout, then examines the most common topics included in Mao’s eyebrow commentary, which often describes the significance of specific pieces of punctuated text in Mao’s own words. The chapter then offers a reading of the five major sections of Wu bei zhi, “Critiques of Military Formulae,” “Investigations of Strategy,” “Systems of Troop Formations and Training,” “Military Supplies and Transport,” and “Record of Divination and Geography,” in which the main text, its punctuation, and relevant eyebrow commentaries are read together to better understand how these mutually create meaning via the physical experience of reading. This reading of Wu bei zhi is followed by a discussion of inconsistencies in Mao Yuanyi’s punctuation, which nonetheless loosely coheres as a system of living practice. Finally, I will finish with a discussion of how punctuation and commentarial practices observable in Wu bei zhi were largely modeled on those of interpretive commentary in other genres in the late Ming.

4.1 A Few Terms

Punctuation in the Ming dynasty served a number of purposes. For example, the act of dividing sentences into syntactical units (judou 句讀 or zhangju 章句) was an essential part of the practice of reading. As noted above, Wu bei zhi doesn’t specify a mark for that, but rather, uses tick marks (dunhao 頓號) or if there is already a circle present because the sentence belongs to an “ingenious place,” it uses circles (quan 圈). Guan Xihua 管錫華 has noted, like Szendy describes above, that such punctuation can become redundant, as he describes of the Jiajing-era manuscript of the Yongle da dian (永樂大典 Encyclopedia of the Yongle reign).348 Guan Xihua

348 Guan Xihua, Zhongguo gudai bioadian fuhao fazhan shi, 221.
describes the development of punctuation practices in Sinitic texts across millennia, with special focus on how it was used to identify grammatical units, kinds of words, and pronunciation. However, he also notes that scholarship on punctuation has often been limited to the field of literature because it so often functions as a vehicle for literary critique in late imperial China. Li Yu's analysis of the history of reading in China, firmly grounded in Song dynasty prescriptive texts, also emphasizes the importance of the process of learning to recognize syntactical divisions across the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties.\textsuperscript{349} Hilde De Weerdt traces the use of critical marks “as instructional tools for composition” to the Ancient Prose (\textit{guwen 古文}) anthologies of Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137–81) in the Song dynasty, a practice that would later be used across genres.\textsuperscript{350} Lucille Chia, Anne McLaren, Cynthia Brokaw, and Kai-wing Chow have all discussed the increase of critical punctuation practices in printed texts in the Ming and Qing dynasties, especially the use of punctuation and commentary in marketing.\textsuperscript{351} Punctuation has not been examined extensively in statecraft and concrete studies texts.

Li Yu translates \textit{judou} as "punctuating" and \textit{quandian 圈點} as "marking," because it is the former that more closely resembles modern punctuation practices.\textsuperscript{352} \textit{Quandian}, which Mao

\begin{footnotes}
\item[349] Yu, “A History of Reading in Late Imperial China,” 68–75.
\item[350] De Weerdt, \textit{Competition over Content}, 161.
\item[351] De Weerdt gives a summary of this literature, especially Chia and Chow. See \textit{Competition over Content}, 162. Lucille Chia, in particular, argues that changes in the use of space and paratextual materials in woodblock-printed books in the late imperial period were "driven by cultural and economic rather than technological factors." Chia, \textit{Printing for Profit}, 46. For the original scholarship cited by De Weerdt, see McLaren, "Constructing New Reading Publics in Late Ming China," in Brokaw and Chow, eds., \textit{Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China}, 152–183; Brokaw, "Reading the Best-Sellers of the Nineteenth Century: Commercial Publishing in Sibao," in Brokaw and Chow, eds., \textit{Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China}, 185, 203; and Chow, \textit{Publishing, Culture, and Power}, Chapter 4.
\item[352] Yu, “A History of Reading in Late Imperial China,” 68–75, 89fn115.
\end{footnotes}
Yuanyi refers to as *pidian* 批點, Li Yu argues, shouldn't be considered a variety of punctuation. In *Traditional Chinese Fiction and Fiction Commentary: Reading and Writing between the Lines*, David Rolston translates *quandian* as "emphatic punctuation." I'll refer to *pidian* as "critical punctuation," "emphatic punctuation," and "marks" in this chapter, because I find they all describe the purpose of the marks equally well. This is especially true in *Wu bei zhi* where we’ll find that *judou* and *pidian* are not separate practices. As an expert reader making legible technical texts and their application to contemporary circumstance, Mao Yuanyi simultaneously parsed grammar and significance to time and space. The marks that performed the task were of one set and system, and should be read for their collective function with other paratexts, especially Mao Yuanyi’s eyebrow commentary.

4.2 Eyebrow Commentary: “Then” and “Now,” “Marvelous” and “Important”

The eyebrow commentary in *Wu bei zhi* contains the most obvious efforts to place the content of the treatise in a particular place and time. The commentary makes this much clear in its identification of items “worth thinking about” and discussions that contrast the far away “ancient times” (*gu 古*) of the techniques and stories in the quoted passages with the techniques and technologies available “today” (*jin 今*). This consistent contrast throughout *Wu bei zhi*’s

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354 Wei Yinzong distinguishes between “annotations” (*zhushu* 注疏) and “commentary” (*pingdian* 評點) which explicate “philosophical and political meanings” and “literary features” respectively. Mao’s eyebrow commentary is mostly the former, but does some work of both. Wei uses “emphasis marks” for *quandian* 圈點. See Wei, “Scholars and Their Marginalia in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911),” 18, 36.
eyebrow commentary between old and new performs the expert reader’s role in applying text to contemporary praxis.

The earliest comments in *Wu bei zhi* that reference a contrast between the old and the new are found in *juan* 11 and 12. The first section of *Wu bei zhi*, “Critiques,” is filled with comments explaining “ancient” methods and historical context, implying that they differ from what Mao’s contemporaries might know. Some marginal comments venture into assessments of historical interpretations of texts: for example, in *juan* 3, page 4a, a marginal comment discusses how “later generations” (*houshi* 後世) felt a particular method in *Sima fa* was effective. Other comments define historical terms that might no longer make sense to a Ming reader: “The mercenaries (*yabing* 牙兵) of the past are the ‘family soldiers’ (*jiading* 家丁) of today.”355 Others celebrate the fact that later people (*houren* 後人) have yet to be able to “conceal” (*man* 瞞) the justifications of the actions of great generals.356 Still others lament contemporary misunderstandings of past actions: “Duke Wei lay bare the Way; the people of today still do not comprehend” (*衛公明道破今人尚不悟*).357 Comments like these are often above passages marked with circles—passages that contain profound, supposedly timeless, principles.358 Even in later military strategy books that are not part of the *Seven Military Classics*, but are part of "Critiques” such as *Huqian jing*, a comment arguing that a particular passage still has

356 In *juan* 11, a passage from *Li Weigong wen dui* is quoted. In this passage, Li Weigong defends his actions using spies. The comment referenced here argues that no-one has been able to better his explanation. Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 11, 11b. See Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 348.
357 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 12, 3b.
358 The passage marked in circles here is from *Li Weigong wen dui*. Sawyer translates it: “This indicates that when the enemy cannot yet be conquered, I must temporarily defend myself. When we have waited until the point when the enemy can be conquered, then we attack him.” See Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 352.
contemporary relevance perches above a passage marked with circles, calling it “a theory that
cannot be erased” (bu kan zhi lun 不刊之論). Medieval military books, in this case, Taibai yin
jing, are praised for “developing that which the ancients did not develop” (fa guren suo wei fa 發
古人所未發). These comments are peppered throughout “Critiques,” and come to take up a
larger portion of the total marginal comments left in later sections.

“Investigations” demonstrates the increasing frequency with which notations regarding
time appear in the marginal comments within its first chapter. Commenting on the Spring and
Autumn Annals, the marginal commentary reads, “In today’s urban battles, [one] must also
emulate this,”361 and a few pages later, “The systems of ancient times and today are different, but
the intent is the same.”362 A notation about historical context appears when a statement regarding
the use of horses shows just how few would have been available in the Warring States period
(475–211 BCE): “At this time, horses were extremely expensive” (此時馬價甚貴).363 In the first
chapter on the Three Kingdoms period, above a series of hollow circles, we are met with the
marginal comment, “[Between] the ancient past and today, this is one wise man” (古今一智人也
).364 There is nostalgia for lost “methods” from the Jin dynasty (晉, 266–420 CE): “This method
was no longer transmitted in the Song dynasty. In recent generations there are a few that have

359 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 18, 15b.
360 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 14, 11a.
361 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 3a.
362 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 14a.
363 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 24, 6b.
364 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 25, 14a.
begun to obtain it. Truly it is like bearing a thousand-catty weight.”365 There are notes regarding what is the same from the past: “Present and past it is all so” (jin gu jie ran 今古皆然).366 In “Investigations,” most notes regarding time seek similarity between the past and present. In later chapters we hear more of the differences.

Although in the next section, “Systems of Troop Formations and Training,” marginal comments are few and far between, these chapters do contain comparisons between old and new technologies and practices. For example, in Chapter 59, above a passage describing the formations established by Ma Long 馬隆 (Jin dynasty), a long marginal comment reads:

Contemporary vehicles can mostly be traced back to this.367 The vehicles of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties are no longer in use. [But] the systems of these three dynasties can still accommodate the Flat Container Cart. What need is there to impede it? Therefore the changes in vehicles are limitless, a reconciliation of man and wood.

今世之車大約祖此, 三代之車不復用矣。三代之制尚可通融扁箱, 又何必泥, 故車之變無窮人木講也。368

The marginal comment here compares the systems and technologies of the distant past with those of the late Ming and their historical predecessors. In “Supplies,” where marginal comments are also few, we still get comments addressing similarities between past and present. In juan 98, when the main text discusses how to meet the armies of the various “northwestern barbarians” (xibei rong lu 西北戎虜) in snowy weather, a piece of marginal commentary states, “The

365 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 29, 4b. The original reads: 此法宋已不傳近世始有得之者實可聞千斤。A catty is approximately 21.1 oz., and Mao’s metaphor invokes a weight of about 1300 pounds. See Wilkinson, Chinese History: A New Manual, 556.
366 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 31, 13b.
367 “This” refers to the description of “Flat Container Carts” in the passage Mao quotes below this marginal comment in the main text.
368 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 59, 16b.
northern caitiffs of today are all like this” (jin zhi beilu jie ru ci 今之北虜皆如此).

In both marginal commentary on “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy” and “Systems,” comparison between the situations faced by armies past and present is made a necessary part of Mao’s contemporaries’ reading experience.

In the “Geography” (du 度) chapters of “Record,” the marginal comments are attentive to correcting out-of-date facts that have worked their way into Wu bei zhi via the quoted sources, especially in the “Governed Realm” (fangyu 方輿) section of “Record.” Many marginal comments describe changes in the names of administrative units and numbers of officers assigned to particular prefectures, districts, counties etc.: “Today, one Assistant Regional Commander has been added for Yongsheng Prefecture [in Nan Zhili];” and “Today there is also a Huichao Regional Commander;” and “Today two Assistant Regional Commanders for Chunshan and Yangdian are also set up;” and “Today, Dongshan has a Commandant.” The list could go on. Still other comments lament the deficiencies of sources on the specifics of contemporary population data, for example, in Liaodong Province: “This, however, only follows military surveys. For recent years it lacks detail. Thus [I] have not corrected it and preserved only the old.” In the first chapter of the section on “Coastal Defense” (haifang 海防), marginal comments touch upon the character of the authors of Ming sources drawn upon for the chapter.

369 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 98, 2b. Northern caitiffs refers to the Manchus who would eventually establish the Qing dynasty.

370 See Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 190, 11a; juan 200, 8ab, and many others. The last three comments are all in juan 200, regarding prefectures, counties, and garrisons in Guangdong Province. Translations of titles are taken from Hucker, Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, 517 (參將), 533 (副總兵), and 433 (守備).

371 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 205, 16ab. The original reads: 「此但照兵覽，近年者未詳，故不改正存故耳」.
On pages 5a and 5b, above a quotation from Zheng Ruozeng is a hearty reinforcement of Zheng’s unique talent and the utility of his work:

Mr. Zheng [Ruozeng] is a unique gentleman across all time. He got along with Hu Xiangmao [Zongxian], but never sought high office. The court offered him honors according to his qualifications, and that was also too much [for him]. Yet, he can be observed in *Chouhai tubian* and *Jiangnan jinglue*. I hope that in future ages he can be thought of and seen. I have used many of his works here.

鄭君古今一奇士也。其人遇胡襄懋而向不得大用，朝廷以資格限人亦太甚矣。然其人見于《籌海圖編》、《江南經略》，志千古後可想見也。所用多矣。372

And, similarly, a few pages later, referring to two Jiajing-era authors: “The two Misters Yi’an and Jingchuan [Tang Shu 唐樞 and Tang Shunzhi 唐順之], how can we do without their words!”373 Yet still other sources from the same period during which the two Tangs flourished, the Jiajing era, were already out of date: “These are all Jiajing-era official systems. Today they have already changed.”374 Sometimes, even the landscape has changed, as we see in “Coastal Defense” above three passages, one from *Chouhai tubian* and another from Tang Shu, on the topic of temples and fields in Zhejiang 浙江: “This explanation is not coherent for today. The reason the fields are [now] few is the proliferation of temples.”375 All in all, these few chapters in the section on geography give us the most direct reference to the utility of contemporary sources for *Wu bei zhi*.

372 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 209, 5ab.
373 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 209, 16a. The comment appears above the last phrases of a passage from a work by Tang Shunzhi. The passage immediately preceding it is from a work by Tang Shu. Here both authors are referred to by their courtesy names. The original reads: 一庵荊川兩先生豈廢其言哉。
374 The original is somewhat longer: 此皆嘉靖間官制也。今已革矣。然總督一官愚意終不【】少。See Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 215, 9b.
375 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 215, 39b. The original reads: 此說于今不通，以寺之多田者寡故也。
Other marginal comments speak to the utility of all the sources employed across *Wu bei zhi* to the late-Ming reader. In addition to the consistent repetition of “recent years” and “today” and “in ancient times,” there is frequent commentary on methods that are “worth emulating” (*kefa 可法*) or “practical” (*shijian 實踐*). In *Sima fa*, above the passage “On using the masses,”376 a comment reads, “The practical Way is exhausted in this [passage]” (*Shijian zhi dao jin ci 實踐之道盡此*).377 Throughout *Wu bei zhi*, other marginal comments identify passages as “worth thinking about” (*yi si ye 宜思也*), or “marvelous” (*miao 妙*, or *miaose 妙色*), or “even more marvelous” (*geng miao 更妙*), or “important!” (*yaozhe 要著*), or “mnemonic” (*jue 訣*).378 Such qualitative comments were also especially common in literary commentaries. Other comments state that a passage summarizes everything on a given topic in a couple of sentences, or explains a difficult problem very clearly. Throughout *Wu bei zhi*, such comments, even those that do not explicitly contrast “old” and “new,” do mark items of relevance to the late-Ming reader, whether that was noting a key tactic, or decision that was a turning point in a historical event, or noting how a piece of technology functions, or how a technique was (still) “marvelous” or “applicable.” Only an expert reader could decipher how texts both old and new were realizable in his context and provide relevant commentary. The question remains how these

376 Sawyer translates the title of this section of *Sima fa* as “Employing Masses.” See Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 142.


378 As noted above, Qiao Na divides Mao Yuanyi’s eyebrow commentary into five categories: (1) targeted evaluations of particular phrases or sentences; (2) explanations of content; (3) explanations of chapter and section divisions and source selection; (4) comments on Ming affairs; (5) personal opinions, for example, evaluations of people’s characters. See Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi tanxi*”, 42–49. I concur with these categorizations of the content of the eyebrow commentary, but prefer to examine their effect and function when paired with punctuation.
paratexts worked in conjunction with the printed punctuation provided in *Wu bei zhi* to guide the reader’s experience, represent Mao Yuanyi’s own reading experience, and both stabilize and destabilize meaning. The answer varies slightly across the five main sections of *Wu bei zhi*.

### 4.3 Punctuation and Commentary Together Across *Wu bei zhi*

#### 4.3.1 Punctuating “Critiques of Military Formulae”

In “Critiques,” Mao Yuanyi’s commentary corrects interpretations by others and highlights parts of the *Seven Military Classics* he thinks readers will find useful to leading an army. In concert with his punctuation, it points out important and profound places in the text, passages that summarize an entire section, even passages that are graced with a rhythm easy to remember. Reading “Critiques,” one immediately begins to get the sense of what is intended by each of the punctuation marks listed above. This section first outlines the function of each of the five kinds of punctuation in “Critiques” using common marginal comments to decipher the meaning of the punctuation marks. Secondly, a longer example of Mao’s concurrent use of all these techniques demonstrates how an expert reader simultaneously deals with problems of hermeneutics and the application of knowledge. Ultimately, Mao’s commentary and punctuation work in concert to identify categories of information within individual passages: critical tactical decisions and actionable items of knowledge for specific situations are contrasted with general principles of leadership, and passages that are easy to remember, summarize text, or vocabulary items are highlighted to give the reader landmarks in the discourse on strategic theory. The result enacts a notion of expertise that depends on the application of canonical text to contemporary practice and discourse.
Two marks, in particular, show up often in “Critiques”: hollow circles and hollow tick marks. According to the explanatory notes, hollow circles, as we’ve seen above, indicate “subtle” or “profound” statements, and hollow tick marks indicate statements of critical importance. In practice, hollow circles are found with statements that are important to leaders learning to manage their own virtue and the morale of troops—perhaps best understood as statements important to a human philosophy of war. Hollow tick marks are found with statements that describe the specific actions or tactics to be undertaken in a given situation, or specific things that a leader must know. In the context of the Seven Military Classics, many of the statements so marked are contingent, hypothetical or conditional.

The eyebrow comments in “Critiques” are integral to interpreting the critical punctuation marks described above. Although long eyebrow comments are not uncommon, we most often see the following kinds of short comments drawing the reader’s attention to a particular section. For example, the eyebrow commentary often points out passages that are “appropriate to think upon.” In the “Nine Terrains” section of Sunzi quoted in Wu bei zhi, a passage is marked with hollow circles:

In antiquity those who were referred to as excelling in the employment of the army were able to keep the enemy’s forward and rear forces from connecting; the many and few from relying on each other; the noble and lowly from coming to each other’s rescue; the upper and lower ranks from trusting each other; the troops to be separated, unable to reassemble, or when assembled, not to be well-ordered. They moved when it was advantageous, halted when it was not advantageous.\(^{379}\)

古之所謂善用兵者、能使敵人先後不相及、眾寡不相恃、貴賤不相救、上下不相收、卒雜而不集兵合而不齊、合于利而動、不合于利而止。\(^{380}\)

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\(^{379}\) Translation is Sawyer, “The Seven Military Classics,” 179.

\(^{380}\) Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 1, 19a.
Above the passage marked in hollow circles, the eyebrow comment reads: “How can one be like this? It is worth thinking deeply about” (何以如此宜深思之).\(^{381}\) This comment reinforces the punctuation, which indicates that the section is “profound,” and also reinforces the interpretation of “profound” statements as those that indicate the ethical and wise behavior of excellent military leaders. Other texts in the “Critiques” section are accompanied by similar comments and punctuation. For example, in *Wuzi*, we see “if the soldiers are committed to fight to the death they will live, whereas if they seek to stay alive they will die” (必死則生、幸生則死) marked as “profound” with hollow circles.\(^{382}\) Above it, the marginal comment states, “One part of the methods of the military is encapsulated in these two statements” (一部兵法盡此二語).\(^{383}\)

Eyebrow commentary is also used to reinforce passages that are marked as critically important and to disagree with both interlinear commentaries and the text proper of some of the classics. In *Sima fa*, for example, the words “In general, in warfare: When the formation is already solid, do not make it heavier. When your main forces are advancing, do not commit all of them for by doing so you will be endangered” (凡戰既固勿重、重進勿盡凡盡危),\(^{384}\) are topped with a simple “important” (yaozhe 要著), and marked with hollow tick marks. Other instances of passages marked “important” (yaowei 要微, yaoyan 要言) can be found in the chapters devoted to *Huqian jing* (see juan 17, pp. 3a, 12b, and 14a). We might characterize the difference between hollow tick marks and hollow circles as follows. Hollow tick marks are used

\(^{381}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 1, 19a.


\(^{383}\) Ibid.

\(^{384}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 3, 14a. Translation from Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 140. Sawyer’s translation does not note the parallel use of *zhong* 重 at the end of the first clause and beginning of the second. By “heavy,” the sentence appears to mean piling on more troops (main forces), where they aren’t necessary.
to highlight facts to be remembered and implementable tactics; circles are used to generalize such facts into abstract principles that force the reader to think. Things marked with circles are timeless principles worthy of cogitation. Things marked with hollow tick marks are procedural, key to operations in the past, and might still be, but they cannot be applied without considering time and space. It is the combination of commentary and punctuation that guides the reader in this particular interpretation of the text.

This is also true for solid tick marks, which, as stated above, are supposed to mark passages that are “obscure” or “enigmatic” (yinwei 隱微) and often work in conjunction with other punctuation and commentary to make difficult passages clear. Sections highlighted with solid tick marks have a deeper meaning than their shallow, semantic meaning implies, or are simply difficult to interpret. These marks call for the reader to contemplate what else might be at stake in the statement. For example, in the “Military Disposition” (junxing 軍形) section of Sunzi, the following passage is punctuated with both hollow circles and solid tick marks as follows (wavy underlining indicates where hollow circles are used; broken lines indicate solid tick marks):

Sun-tzu said: “In antiquity those that excelled in warfare first made themselves unconquerable in order to await [the moment when] the enemy could be conquered. "Being unconquerable lies with yourself; being conquerable lies with the enemy. “Thus one who excels in warfare is able to make himself unconquerable, but cannot necessarily cause the enemy to be conquerable.”

孫子曰、昔之善戰者、先為不可勝、以待敵之可勝、不可勝在己。可勝在敵。故善戰者。能為不可勝、不能使敵之必可勝。
In this case, the reader needs to contemplate what the statement underlined with solid tick marks might further imply—perhaps that a successful general can only control his own army’s preparedness; he cannot control the preparation (or lack-thereof) of the enemy. Further examples from other sections of “Critiques” confirm this definition of the purpose of solid tick marks.

Solid tick marks combined with eyebrow commentary make their function especially clear. Such eyebrow commentary often compares contemporary interpretations of texts with older ones, saying that Ming readers have misinterpreted a particular passage. Throughout “Critiques,” we see examples of the eyebrow commentary disagreeing with the interlinear commentary, such as, “This explanation is wrong” above a passage from Liu tao. The interlinear commentary explains that the main text is speaking of one’s own army scheming against the enemy if one hears or sees their plans. The eyebrow commentary indicates that the opposite is the case—the main text is actually speaking of the danger of being overheard, seen, or known by the enemy.387 Solid tick marks work in conjunction with the commentary to mark the difficulty of interpreting this passage in the main text. The part of the passage of the main text that is interpreted incorrectly in the interlinear commentary is marked with solid tick marks (obscure), and the parts of the passage preceding it that discuss how to avoid danger are marked with hollow circles (profound).

Statements marked with the two remaining forms of punctuation also make Mao’s definitions of each mark more legible to modern eyes, though they are less consistently paired with eyebrow commentary. Hollow, rectangular underlining does, truly, highlight parts of a passage that act as a decent abstract of its entirety. For example, in the first section of Wuzi, “Planning for the State,” the first sentence of the second paragraph, identified by its indentation

387 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 5, 8b.
to a new column of text, reads, “Wu-tzu said: ‘In antiquity those who planned government affairs
would invariably first instruct the hundred surnames and gain the affection of the common
people.’” (吳子曰、昔之國家者、必先教百姓而親萬民). The sections underlined here are
marked with hollow lines in the woodblock print of Wu bei zhi. Reading the rest of the passage,
one understands that this sentence sums up how one goes about “harmonizing” the people, and
therefore the army, and therefore gains victory in war. Solid, black, rectangular underlining
supplements this by identifying important vocabulary items relevant to the paragraph.

The exact words describing the function of solid black underlining in the fanli are, “Solid
lines separate sections and topics.” Rather than simply separating sections and topics, solid lines
usually underline important concepts that become shorthand. For example, in “Planning for the
State,” the “four disharmonies” are each named and underlined in black (see Figure 2). Ralph
Sawyer translates the passage as follows:

There are four disharmonies. If there is disharmony in the state, you cannot put
the army into the field. If there is disharmony within the army, you cannot deploy into
formations. If you lack harmony within the formations, you cannot advance into battle.
If you lack cohesion during the conduct of battle, you cannot score a decisive
victory.389

These “four disharmonies” are to be avoided by first “instructing” and “gaining the affection of
the common people” through good governance. Together with a line of hollow circles later in the
passage that identifies what constitutes good governance, these punctuations work in tandem to

388 Mao Yuanyi, “Bingjue ping,” in Wu bei zhi, juan 2, 2b. Translation is by Ralph D. Sawyer, The Seven Military
Classics, 207. Underlining added.
390 Original Chinese text and underlining from Mao Yuanyi, ‘Bingjue ping,’ juan 2, 2b.
guide the reader in how the paragraph ought to be read, and mark key items that constitute necessary vocabulary to participate in a discussion on the topic.

It is rare that a passage, even in the heavily punctuated “Critiques” section, contains all five forms of punctuation and eyebrow commentary. However, some passages do contain most of these forms of guidance for the reader. The passage in Sunzi titled “The Nine Changes” provides a particularly useful example of how spacing, eyebrow commentary, punctuation for syntax, and critical punctuation function in concert with one another to handle passages where disagreement exists over both the semantic reading of the transmitted text and possible losses during the transmission process. Together, commentary and punctuation both evaluate the passage and make it legible to Ming readers. Sawyer notes that this title is likely a later accretion to the text. He writes, “‘Nine Changes’ forces the commentators to somehow justify ‘changes’ because the chapter’s admonitions against certain courses of action on particular terrains do not constitute changes.”391 Sawyer goes on to describe three positions commentators have taken: (1) “that the chapter refers to employing the expedient—the ‘unusual’ rather than the ‘normal,’” when it refers to “changes,” (2) that the original, whatever it was, has only been passed down in a “mangled” form; and (3) that the “nine” refers to “many,” and readers who insist on finding exactly “nine changes” are being a little too picky.392 As we’ll see below, the eyebrow commentary in Wu bei zhi subscribes to the last of these theories. In Table 3 at the end of this chapter, I’ve provided the translation for the first few lines of “The Nine Changes” as presented in Wu bei zhi with its interlinear and eyebrow commentaries. The translation of “The Nine

391 Sawyer, The Seven Military Classics, 446, n107.
392 Ibid.
Changes” itself and quotations of it found in the commentaries of *Wu bei zhi* are Sawyer’s (see p. 171). For an example woodblock print of this passage, see Figure 3.

The interlinear and eyebrow commentaries quoted in Table 3 address the problem of textual coherence and continuity brought up by Sawyer. The interlinear commentary is divided into two by the large, hollow circle placed between the characters “*hui*” (會) and “*yi*” (一).

Circles like this usually divide commentaries written by separate authors. This implies that Mao Yuanyi is not the author of both interlinear commentaries. Most authors writing about *Wu bei zhi* as a window into Mao Yuanyi’s “strategic thought” assume that these commentaries are his own. However, punctuation of all stripes appears in these interlinear commentaries—especially critical punctuation. In addition, the eyebrow commentaries, of which Mao Yuanyi claims authorship, are often used in conversation with the interlinear commentaries. “The Nine Changes” is one such conversation. The eyebrow commentary, here, is used to select the third of the interpretive approaches outlined by Sawyer above. Mao interprets the number nine as a general reference to “a few,” and counts ten items that he considers changes: five terrains (*wu di* 五地) and five things that are not done (literally, “the Five “some that are nots,” *wu you suo bu* 五有所不). The eyebrow commentary is positioned directly above the last line of the second interlinear commentary, and continues above the list of “some that are nots” across pages 13a and 13b. It begins by saying that “this theory is incorrect” (*ci shuo fei ye* 此說非也). Which theory does the eyebrow commentary refer to?

The second interlinear commentary argues that the second interpretation Sawyer lists, that the chapters of *Sunzi* have been mangled and one must look between two chapters of *Sunzi*.

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393 Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanhi yu *Sunzi bingfa,*” 19, and, more explicitly, Qiao Na 乔娜, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* tanxi,” 38.
to cobble together the “Nine Changes,” is mistaken. This is the same “incorrect theory” the eyebrow commentary identifies. The eyebrow commentary explains why the second interlinear commentary is correct in its assessment of the mistaken theory: between the five ways of using terrain and five prohibitions on certain kinds of action listed here, we have close to nine changes, which is intended as an approximate number, and this, therefore, is a perfectly acceptable reading of *Sunzi bingfa*; there is no need to assume a mistake in the original text. Both the interlinear commentary and Mao Yuanyi’s eyebrow commentary argue that interpretations of the second kind Sawyer describes, wherein the original text is mangled, are trying too hard. These two commentaries both prefer the third interpretation.

Modern scholars have misread this particular eyebrow comment in two ways. First, they assume that the inline commentary is also Mao Yuanyi’s. However, critical punctuation is used in all of the inline commentaries in “Critiques,” which Mao Yuanyi does not add for any of the text in *Wu bei zhi* to which he lays explicit claim. It is a safer assumption that the interlinear commentary is borrowed from elsewhere. Secondly, modern scholars do not realize that the eyebrow commentary continues from page 13a to 13b. They read the pages separately. Combined, these readings cause scholars to believe that Mao Yuanyi is contradicting Sunzi. For example, if one neglects to read the second page of the eyebrow comment here (note the page break marked in Table 3), the reader misses Mao’s comment “Here, it just gives an approximate number, nine” (*Da lüe ju shu jiu* 大略舉數曰九). Without that sentence, the eyebrow commentary makes little sense, and it is easy to mistake it for a sentence that agrees the text of

394 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 1, 13b.
Sunzi has been jumbled. By neglecting to notice that eyebrow commentaries cross pagination boundaries in Wu bei zhi, and by assuming that the interlinear commentaries are Mao Yuanyi’s, we generate a very different reading of Sunzi than Mao Yuanyi performed. These mis-readings are based on assumptions about the authorship of interlinear commentaries in Wu bei zhi and the function of eyebrow commentaries that are belied by careful identification of how Mao Yuanyi’s punctuation and commentarial practices work in concert with one another. These assumptions are likely not those a Ming reader would have made. One misreading of Sunzi is insignificant in the context of a 240-juan treatise, but if we do not question our basic assumptions how authorship is claimed in a Ming text, we can easily miss the work that punctuation and commentary perform in Wu bei zhi.

There are a number of punctuation, commentarial, and formatting strategies at work that make the “The Nine Changes” legible and coherent. Firstly, as in all parts of Wu bei zhi, spacing, specifically, switching between columns and the addition of section headings with indentation, is used to demarcate separate passages and topics that are intended to stand alone. This is easily

395 For example, Zhao Na has suggested that Mao Yuanyi rejects Sunzi’s text itself, that “this theory is incorrect” refers to Sunzi’s theory for precisely this reason. Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi yu Sunzi bingfa” 茅元仪与《孙子兵法》 [Mao Yuanyi and Sunzi bingfa], in Binzhou xueyuan xuebao 滨州学院学报 [Journal of Binzhou University], 27.5 (Oct. 2011): 19. Zhao Na is not alone in making the assumptions that the interlinear commentaries are Mao’s. The interlinear commentaries in the section Bingjue ping cannot be found among the most popular commentaries on the military classics from the Ming dynasty. For example, they do not match the commentaries of Zhao Benxue 趙本學, Li Yin 李寅, or those in Ji Tianbao 吉天保, Shiyi jia zhu Sunzi 十一家注孙子 [Annotations of the eleven experts on Sunzi], in GJK. Zhao Na argues that Mao Yuanyi wrote the interlinear commentary on Sunzi himself, simplifying the combined annotations of Shiyi jia zhu Sunzi. See Zhao Na, “Mao Yuanyi yu Sunzi bingfa,” 17–18. Qiao Na has also argued that in “Critiques,” most of the interlinear commentary is Mao Yuanyi’s, though in later chapters he quotes other commentaries. See Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi tanxi,” 38–39. I note this not to call out otherwise stellar scholarship, but to note how all modern scholars are susceptible to projecting our own assumptions about authorship onto Ming commentaries.
observed in Figure 3, which is two pages from a woodblock print of “The Nine Changes” in Wu bei zhi. Note also that grammatical pauses are demarcated by solid tick marks throughout. The reader is left to determine what the words mean, what importance to attach to them, and how to relate them to the rest of the text. Compare the underlined parts of my translation and transcription in Table 3 to the sections in the original underlined with hollow rectangles. Recall that hollow rectangles indicate sections that summarize the content of the passage (see Figure 3). These sections are specific rules that can be memorized—the nine changes themselves. The section underlined in small dots (hollow tick marks in the original) is the most “key” part of the passage—a hypothetical statement about what a successful general must know in order to be successful—i.e. How to take advantage of the nine changes and terrain. The section marked with hollow circles in the original makes a statement generalizing the more specific recommendations above, and commenting on what makes a wise and trustworthy leader. Combined, these punctuation marks direct the reader to a summary of the section “The Nine Changes,” a summary of what, precisely, a general should know from it for success, and a normative statement about the relationship of the nine changes to an ethically reliable general.

The dissection of this passage and its printed commentary and punctuation allows us to see Mao performing several functions of not just an expert literati reader, but specifically a expert in military affairs. In the marginal commentary Mao has expertly deciphered the semantic meaning of the passage and addressed its textual history in a fashion literati would use across genres, especially the Confucian canon; he has identified key pieces of actionable knowledge for Ming commanders to apply in practice, despite the age of the text; and has identified normative principles of leadership. The result is one way in which this system of punctuation and commentary has enacted a late-Ming definition of expertise and statecraft that is based in literati
reading practices and textual authority but demands application in practice. Though the system is applied somewhat differently to other kinds of technical information across other sections of *Wu bei zhi*, we continue to see similar results.

4.3.2 **Punctuating “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy”**

Paying attention to punctuation and eyebrow comments in “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy” gives a slightly different picture of the meaning behind each of the punctuation marks employed, but leads to a similar picture of late-Ming military expertise. In “Critiques,” all forms of punctuation listed in the *fanli* are employed to varying degrees. In “Investigations” all forms of punctuation are employed with the exception of solid tick marks. In addition, where in “Critiques” hollow tick marks and hollow circles indicate specific actions to be taken in a given situation and normative comments on the appropriate virtues and behavior of generals respectively, in “Investigations” we see them take on a slightly different purpose. Hollow tick marks indicate the crucial decision that determines the outcome of a series of historical events. Hollow circles usually indicate a general principle demonstrated by the historical event. These two still primarily differ in their emphasis on specific actions and general principles respectively. Eyebrow commentary is often provided on a given event. Interlinear commentary is far less frequent, with the exception of the first chapter of this section, which relates military events from the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Punctuation and eyebrow commentary again combine to draw out a particular narrative, but this time with less emphasis on philosophical, ethical, or strategic principles, and more on concrete tactics and discussion of their contemporary relevance.

First, let us examine the use of hollow tick marks to identify crucial tactical decisions. A short passage detailing the events of Cao Cao’s (155–220 CE) defeat of Bo Rao 白縛 (c.
191 CE) displays the function of hollow tick marks and eyebrow commentary in “Investigations.” This passage is excerpted (inexactly) from *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒 (Complete mirror for aid in government):

**Main text:**

Bao Xin [152–192] said to Cao Cao, “Yuan Shao is the leader of the alliance. He relies on force to consolidate his advantage. He will sow disorder himself. This will be another Dong Zhuo (d. 192). If you pressure him, then his strength cannot be controlled. Moreover, we can occupy the south of Dahe, and wait for their rebellion. [Cao] Cao approved this, and met Bo Rao’s more than 100,000 soldiers at Heishan, to attack Dongjun. [Cao] Cao led the army in demolishing it. Yuan Shao, followed, confessing [Cao] Cao was the Taishou of Dongjun and governed Eastern Wuyang.

鲍信謂曹操曰，袁紹為盟主，因權專利，將自生亂，是復有一卓也，抑之則力不能制，且可規大河之南，以待其變，操善之，會黑山白饒等十餘萬眾略東郡，操引兵擊破之，袁紹因表操為東郡太守，治東武陽。

**Eyebrow comment:**

That is, the numerous phrases like “Han Xin ascends the altar” and “Zhuge Liang comes out of his hut,” are the foundations of [Cao] Cao’s schemes for hegemony. How can one not carve this in wood and weep over it?

即韓信登壇孔明出廬數語乃操圖霸之本也焉得不刻木而哭之【也】。

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396 *Zhuo* 卓 refers to Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d. 192), who deposed Liu Bian 劉辯 (176–190), Emperor Shao of the Eastern Han dynasty after the city of Luoyang had already fallen into chaos. He is blamed for the fall of the Eastern Han. Bao Xin had advocated that Yuan Shao interfere and prevent Dong Zhuo from gaining a foothold, but was not heeded. See De Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23-220 AD)*, 12, 157–158.

397 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 25, 4a. The last characters in the eyebrow comment are somewhat blurry. For this passage in *Zizhi tongjian*, see Sima Guang 司馬光 (Song dynasty), “Hanji” 漢紀 [Record of the Han], in *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒 [Comprehensive mirror for aid in government], juan 60, page 1925. The same events are described in the first chapter of Chen Shou 陳壽 (Jin dynasty), *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 [Record of the Three Kingdoms], juan 1, 8–9.
The underlined section of the main text above is marked with hollow tick marks. Bao Xin’s proposal that they retreat to the south of Dahe and wait for Yuan Shao’s forces to turn on themselves is identified as the crucial decision in Cao Cao’s defeat of Bo Rao at Dongjun in 191.

The marginal comment requires a bit of deciphering. The two idioms referenced here, are (1) “Han Xin ascends the altar” (Han Xin dengtan 韓信登談), and (2) “Zhuge Liang comes out of his hut” (Kongming chu lu 孔明出廬). The latter is not commonly thought of as an idiom, but refers to the same events as the more prevalent “going thrice to the thatched cottage” (san gu maolu 三顧茅廬), which refers to Liu Bei’s three journeys to Zhuge Liang’s (Kongming) hermitage to ask him to lead his armies. “Han Xin ascends the altar” refers to Liu Bang’s 刘邦 (d. 195 BCE) construction of an altar to woo Han Xin into leading his armies. Both, for Mao Yuanyi, would have been common metaphors for going to great lengths to employ military talent. The marginal comment implies that Cao Cao attains his hegemony over a territory by listening to the advice of a talented subordinate, and waiting for the enemy to destroy itself. Yuan Shao, instead of finding talented people to share his burden (like Han Xin and Zhuge Liang in the idioms), consolidates authority in his own hands, thereby sowing internal disorder. The marginal commentary and hollow tick marks together guide the reader to what Mao considered the turning point of the story.

Another short passage demonstrates the function of hollow tick marks, hollow circles, and marginal commentary in conjunction with one another in “Investigations.” Mao copies the story of the Battle of Jinyang 晋陽 between the houses of Zhao 趙 and Zhi 智 in the Warring
States period, most likely from *Zhanguo ce.* He uses hollow circles to identify principles of good governance, helped along by the marginal commentary, and hollow tick marks to identify a key tactical decision. The text reads as follows:

**Main text:**

Upon reaching Jinyang, Zhao Xiangzi [the viscount of Zhao] viewed the city walls and granaries. He addressed Zhang Mengtan saying: "The walls are finished, and the granaries are full. But we are without arrows; how should I proceed?" Mengtan said to him: ["I have heard that when Master Dong governed Jinyang he had the fences of all the public buildings planted with rows of cane and thorn bushes, some of which have grown very tall by now. You could cut them and use them] for arrows."

趙襄子至晉陽，視城郭府庫，謂張孟談曰：「城完矣。廪實矣。無矢奈何？」談曰：「董子之治晉陽也，公宮之垣，皆以荻蒿苫楚廧之，其高至丈餘，發之則箘簬……」

**Eyebrow comment:**

When you subconsciously worry over things that have not taken shape, this is considered planning for the good of the country.

隱慮無形是謂謀國。

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398 This battle was actually part of the events whereby the Houses of Zhao, Han, and Wei, agreed to divide the state of Jin among themselves during the fifth century BCE. This involved conquering the House of Zhi, which happened at Jinyang. The story is told from the perspective of the House of Zhao here, which was betrayed by its two allies. Zhang Mengtan helps the leader of the House of Zhao to keep them in check. For an English account of these events, see Chen, "The Age of the Territorial Lords,” 113–114. See below for the an account of the battle as recorded in *Han Fei zi,* translated by Burton Watson.

399 The original text is most closely matched by that in Liu Xiang 劉向, *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 [Strategies of the Warring States], 593–595. However, most of the passage appears in *Hanfei zi.* See, “The Ten Faults,” in *Han Fei zi, juan* 3, 177–180. An English translation exists. See Watson, *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu,* 57–62. I have borrowed Watson’s translation where possible. These sections of translation appear in brackets [ ]. Names from Watson’s translation are written in Pinyin instead of their original Wade-Giles Romanization. The rest of the translation is my own, as the text in *Wu bei zhi* differs from *Hanfei zi.* The story is likely copied from elsewhere, and like most in the section “Investigations,” truncated.
Here, Mao Yuanyi has used hollow circles to mark a specific action taken by Master Dong, and described by Zhang Mengtan. However, the eyebrow comment identifies this action as the foresight of a morally upright ruler, rather than a key decision in a time of battle. This gives the reader insight into why Mao marked this sentence as “profound” rather than “key.” The passage continues:

Main text:

"["I have enough arrows now," said the viscount, “but what will I do for metal?" Zhang Mengtan replied: "I have heard that when Master Dong governed Jinyang he had the pillars and bases in the main halls of the public buildings and lodges made out of refined copper. You could remove them and use them." ] The viscount replied, "Good." [When the viscount had finished issuing his war orders and had made all preparations for defense, the armies of the three other states pressed the attack for three months without success.] Mengtan thereupon defeated Zhi Bo, and firmly established the house of Zhao. He then serenely gave up his authority and status, and farmed in the hills of Fuqin for three years. The houses of Han, Wei, Qi, and Chu all betrayed the alliance and schemed against Zhao. The viscount was frightened, and went to see Mengtan, and schemed with him. Mengtan said: "My lord, if you were to govern me with sword in hand, and make me a grand minister of the state, then I will try to make a plan for you." The viscount said, "Yes." Mengtan then sent his wife to Chu, his eldest son to Han, his second son to Wei, and his youngest son to Qi. The four states began to doubt, and their plans failed. Zhao was without fear.

Eyebrow comment:

If he did not retire to farm, then his later action sending his sons away would have been
insufficient to defeat the plans of the others. Therefore, he took up office and retired all
with the benefit of the state in mind.

[不退耕則後之遣子亦不足敗人謀故曰進退皆以圖國] 400

Here, hollow circles identify, first, another action taken by Master Dong in the past that was
“profound,” demonstrating moral governance in preparing his city for future attacks. Hollow
circles also identify a demand by Zhang Mengtan for the viscount of Zhao to demonstrate good
leadership. On the other hand, hollow tick marks identify the key decision that Zhang Mengtan
made that would ensure Zhao’s safety: the distribution of his family amongst potentially
rebellious allied lands. The eyebrow comment makes it clear that without having made the
decision to retire from service briefly, he would not have had the family members necessary to
do so. While Zhang’s decision was key to the successful control of Zhao’s lands within his
lifetime, it could also be interpreted as the actions of a morally upright servant of the state. Here,
the difference between a “key” and “profound” piece of text is identified by a combination of
distinct punctuation marks and eyebrow commentary. Without the commentary, what exactly
makes the marked text different might be unclear.

Here, the use of hollow tick marks to identify turning points in historical events and
hollow circles to identify actions that exemplify principles of moral governance is distinct from
their use in “Critiques.” Where marks in “Critiques” identify specific tactics of warfare and
general principles of moral leadership, the content of those passages does not generally include
specific historical examples. In “Investigations,” specific examples of these tactics and principles
are contextualized. Here, Mao demonstrates a mastery of the application of strategic theory and
political philosophy to specific historical situations. In future chapters, his mastery of textual

400 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 19, 2b–3a.
knowledge will be applied more explicitly to contemporary affairs, further bolstering the notion of expertise enacted in the reading of *Wu bei zhi*.

4.3.3 **Punctuating “Systems of Troop Formations and Training”**

“Systems of Troop Formations and Training” offers a useful demonstration of the coherence of the system of punctuation across *Wu bei zhi* even as it shifts to accommodate extremely different kinds of information. Even within this section, its two main subsections, "Formations" (*zhen* 阵) and "Training" (*lian* 練) differ somewhat in the use of punctuation, but ultimately their use of Mao’s punctuation marks reinforces expertise conceived of as the application of textual knowledge to practical circumstance. Both sub-sections primarily employ tick marks, hollow circles, the occasional black underlining, and spacing to make the material legible. Far fewer marginal comments appear. These are the first chapters where punctuation is used in the main text to mark explanations of juxtaposed illustrations, or where punctuation is used in text that is part of an illustration. Analysis of the use of hollow tick marks and hollow circles in “Systems” shows that what was considered "crucial" (hollow tick marks) was usually a concrete piece of information or instruction, and what was considered "profound" (hollow circles) was a generalized principle of operation or a rule. This is consistent with earlier uses of these marks, which also used tick marks for things more specific, and hollow circles for more general ideas. However, the specific content marked changes considerably.

Where hollow tick marks were used in previous chapters for actions or decisions that were either crucial to remember or constituted a specific turning point, and hollow circles were used to mark general principles of good, ethical, military leadership, they are now used for far more specific purposes. In "Systems of Troop Formations and Training," hollow tick marks
generally mark precise descriptions of formations—how many soldiers are placed where, in what units. These marks are also used to give definitions of terms, especially the names of military units and the numbers and kinds of soldiers included in them. Statements regarding the relationships of formations to the divinatory principles or astronomical configurations that inspired them are often marked with hollow tick marks. Explanations of illustrations and important facts to remember are all highlighted with hollow tick marks. Abstract principles, and these alone, are marked with hollow circles.

For example, in Chapter 52, "Formations, 1" (Zhen yi 阵一) quotes “Record of the Woqi Formation” (Woqi zhen ji 握奇陣記) from Zhao Benxue’s Xu wujing zongyao. This passage is translated below. The passage demonstrates a number of the characteristics listed above for hollow tick marks and hollow circles. Firstly, the passage is nearly indecipherable without the assistance of the illustrations from pages 16b, 17b and 18a in the same chapter (52, see Figure 5). The hollow tick marks are used first, to define terms, and, second, to mark descriptions of illustrations. Hollow circles are used to highlight mathematical principles and an abstract summary of how the described formations are supposed to be used.

Record of Grasping the Unorthodox Formation

The method of “Grasping the Unorthodox” was created when the Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan ruled the world. When the era of the Divine Husbandman (Shennong 神農) collapsed, the feudal lords attacked and invaded one another’s territories. The Yellow Emperor used the weapons of war to conquer them. [He] shaped his formation by

401 The use of “unorthodox” to translate qi 奇 is Ralph Sawyer’s choice. He has an extensive discussion of the oppositional terms qi 奇 and zheng 正 (“orthodox”) that were used as far back as Sunzi. See Sawyer, The Seven Military Classics, 427–29, n33. It also refers to odd numbers, as opposed to even, ou 偶, or paired. In this passage, qi is later defined as a mathematical concept—the one in the ratio of 3 to 1 that comes from the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. Reading further, the qi clearly refers to the soldier who is the “1” in that three to one ratio—i.e. an “unorthodox” troop, or, perhaps, the odd troop out.
observing the trigrams of *The Changes*. Its arrangement and ordering originate in objects pre-dating Heaven. ‘Heaven and Earth are given predetermined positions,’ and therefore the Qian [for heaven] and Kun [for earth] trigrams are assigned first. ‘Mountains and water exchange their qi,’ and therefore the Dui [for water] and Gen [for mountains] trigrams are assigned next. ‘The thunder and wind beat one another,’ thus the Xun [for wind] and Zhen [for thunder] trigrams are assigned next. ‘Water and Fire do not harm each other,’ and so next are assigned the Li [for fire] and Kan [for water] trigrams.402 The four formations arranged outside Qian and Kun are [marked] “Heaven.” Heaven surrounds the outside. The four formations arranged on the inside of Qian and Kun are marked “Earth.” Earth holds the center. The four formations arranged outside Dui, Xun, Gen, and Zhen are marked “Winds” and “Clouds.” The wind moves in the Heavens and transforms. The clouds come out of the earth and soar away. The four formations arranged outside Li and Kan are marked “Tianchong” [as in, the star]. This is the meaning of the mutual opposition of morning and evening. The four formations arranged inside Dui, Gen, Xuan, and Zhen are [marked as] “Tianheng.” “Heng” is a tool used to spy upon heaven. [It] abides in the space of the Big Dipper. The four formations arranged inside of Li and Kan are marked “Axe of the Earth.” “Axe” refers to the key part of a cart. The wheels turn and the axe holds their center. A compass is round, [but] these objects are straight. Once straight, arrange them. Thus it is called “arranging in columns” (*zong bu* 縱布). It has nine armies; it has sixty-four formations; its shape is circular; its symbol is the dragon. Qian is its head; Kun is its tail; Dui, Gen, Xuan, and Zhen are its four feet; Kan and Li are its two wings. “Qi” 奇 is the number associated with circles. All circular things, if the circumference is 3, then their inner diameter is 1 [Qi]. For each “three” there is one “qi.” In the Shi hexagram [for military affairs], on its outer [upper] side there are eight Kun trigrams with 24 lines. Divining with yarrow sticks, all together one gathers, old and young, 1,344 [soldiers]. On its inner [bottom] side are four Kan trigrams with eight lines. Divining with yarrow sticks, all together one gathers, old and young, 448 [soldiers]. Take one from the inner, and three from the outer. Three become the outer encampments, one goes to the center army. The general [thus] grasps them [the ones for the center army], and so [this formation] is given the name “grasping the Qi.” It won at Banquan, and capturing Chiyou at Zhuolu. Open country, this is where this formation achieves victory. At this time, the Yellow Emperor was roaming without a permanent place; his city and palace were not yet prepared. And so, he separated his army into inner and outer and made camps and regiments. Inside there were 4 camps, and outside there were 12 camps surrounding them. In the middle there were 27 regiments surrounding the outer camps, and 28 outer regiments again defending the central
regiments. Attacking, defending, resting and moving, their methods are one and one alone.

握奇陣記
握奇之法，軒轅黃帝天下之所作也，神農世衰，諸侯相侵伐，黃帝習用干戈以征之，其陣觀于易象而為形，其布列本于先天對待而起數，天地定位，故首布乾而坤，山澤通氣，故次布兌而艮，雷風相薄，故次布巽而震，水火不相射，故次布離而坎，布於乾坤之外四陣為天，天包乎外也，布於乾坤之內四陣為地，地載乎內也，布於兌巽艮震之外四陣為風雲，風皷于天而變化，雲出於地而飛揚也，布於離坎之外四陣為天衝，卯酉相射之義也，布於兌艮巽震之內四陣為天衡，衡者，窺天之器，璣璇而衡居其所也，布於離坎之內四陣為地軸，軸者，車之樞要，輪轉而軸執其中也，規環爲圓，對待爲直，直而布之，故曰縱布也，其軍九，其陣六十四，其形圓，其象爲龍，乾爲首，坤爲尾，兌艮巽震爲四足，坎離爲兩翼也，奇者，圓之數也，凡物之圓者，外圍三，則內徑一，三各一奇，師卦外焉八坤，其畫二十有四，共蓍策積老少一千三百四十四，內焉四坎，其畫有八，其蓍策積老少四百四十八，內得其一，外得其三，三為外營，一爲中軍，大將握之，故取其名爲握奇，戰揄罔于坂泉，擒蚩尤於涿鹿之野者，斯陣之勝也，是時黃帝遷徙無常處，城郭宮室未備，輙以兵師分內外爲營衛，內營四，外營十二以包之，中衛二十七，包外營，外衛二十有八，又包中衛，攻守居行，其法一而巳矣。

Interpreting this passage and its punctuation requires a bit of background knowledge of the Book of Changes, a bit of mathematics, and access to the illustrations it, however obliquely, refers back to (Figure 4). Here, the basic reasoning behind the name of this formation is that the “qi” troops are “grasped” (wo 握) between the outer encampments (wai ying 外營). The question is to what “qi” refers. In most military texts, especially the Seven Military Classics, qi forms a conceptual binary with zheng 正. Ralph Sawyer translates these terms as “unorthodox” and “orthodox” respectively, and one might best think of these as describing strategies that are unexpected, wily, or circuitous (unorthodox), and those that are easily predicted and standard fare (orthodox). In this passage, however, qi is used to mean something different: qi is a number associated with circles, namely, the diameter, which is one-third of the circumference. Because

403 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 52, 19b–21a.
this is a circular formation, the author of the passage argues, the soldiers of the army are divided between the outer and inner encampments at a ratio of three to one. The precise number of soldiers is calculated using the lines in the trigrams that make up the *Shi* hexagram (*Shi gua* 師卦), maintaining a ratio of one “qi” soldier to every soldier sent to the outer circle of camps. Of these descriptions that Zhao Benxue provides of the cosmological and mathematical basis for this particular troop formation, Mao Yuanyi marks definitions of terms and explanations of the importance of trigrams, text relevant to illustrations of the formation, and rules or principles that generalize something discussed in the passage.

The first few pieces of text marked with hollow tick marks explain the importance of trigrams and their associated regiments or camps and why they are located where. The long piece of text with hollow tick marks, “Thus it is called….two wings,” elaborates on the diagrams. The plain black text above it has explained the labels in the first illustration of this formation appearing on page 16b. This sentence points out the “nine armies” in the second illustration (page 17b), and describes which “army,” each associated with a particular direction and trigram (the squares and large circle), represents what part of the symbolic form (dragon) of the formation. The hollow tick marks thus point to the pieces of the text that explore the astrological and divinatory basis of the formation and its illustrations.

The rules or principles marked with hollow circles above, are, in order of appearance: (1) a mathematical principle describing the ratio of the circumference of a circle to a diameter; (2) a description of how to apply this ratio to the selection and distribution of soldiers in this formation; and (3) a statement that the method for setting up this formation doesn’t vary regardless of the activity the army is engaged in. Immediately prior to that last statement, there is a statement describing the exact number of camps and regiments and their placement marked
with hollow tick marks. Above these two statements is a marginal comment that reads: “If one knows this, then one knows [how to] unify camps and battle formations” (知此可以知營陣之合). The marginal comment summarizes the marked pieces of information and identifies them as a general principle of leadership. The pattern continues elsewhere in “Formations.” For example in Chapter 57, in a discussion of Li Quan’s 李筌 interpretation of those formations attributed to Zhuge Liang and named after animals (eg. “Curled snake formation” She pan zhen 蛇蟠陣), we find the following marked with hollow circles: “Therefore those who abandon battle formations when employing troops are defeated generals; those who pursue victory while clinging to battle formations are foolish generals” (故廢陣形而用兵者，敗將也，執陣形而求勝者，愚將也). This is followed by definitions of all such formations marked with hollow tick marks. Throughout the subsection “Formations,” the established pattern using hollow tick marks to mark more specific, actionable ideas, and hollow circles to mark generalizable principles remains in force.

However, “Systems” is one of the more diverse sections of Wu bei zhi, which demands varied sources necessary to cover all of the topics it includes, and therefore varied used of punctuation, especially in the subsection “Training.” Sections containing extensive continuous prose (rather than segmented lists) are punctuated much like the “Formations” section analyzed above. This is true of Chapters 68 through 75, which are based on late-Ming training manuals containing material on the selection of soldiers and other administrative details of the army. Key logistical details are often marked with hollow tick marks. Chapters 76 through 83 on the

404 Ibid., 21a.
405 Ibid., juan 57, 12b.
406 Ibid., 12b–13a.
teaching of flag signals contain similar critical punctuation. Chapters 91 and 92, the last chapters in “Teaching Skills,” return to Mao’s extensive use of hollow tick marks and, occasionally circles, to mark more information on staff fighting, weaponless fighting, and a comparison of all methods using the work of Qi Jiguang. Given the embodied nature of the skills in these chapters and the physical nature of the technologies discussed, the use of hollow tick marks and hollow circles in “Training” is interesting for its performance of Mao’s selected best advice for succeeding at various martial arts. Below, in the section on inconsistencies in punctuation systems, I will discuss the distinct lack of punctuation in Chapters 84 through 88, and the borrowed punctuation system in Chapters 89 and 90, but here let us focus on the function of hollow tick marks and circles as Mao performs his reading of physical practice.

Chapter 91 serves as a useful example of how Mao approached this material. In the ninth chapter on “Teaching Skills” (Jiao yi 教藝), titled “Comparison” (bijiao 比較), names of techniques and weapons are marked with black underlining, and hollow tick marks appear beside specific definitions and advice regarding technique. For example, on page two, comparing archery practices, the following is marked with hollow tick marks:

When shooting arrows, set up your body as a large frame. You must be quick to ready the arrow, eyes focused on the bandit only. The front hand holds [the bow] still; the back hand adds power. The front hand holds the bow like the moon. Those who let go of the arrow swiftly and silently are first-rate.

These specific instructions on how to use one’s body to shoot an arrow, an actionable item of embodied practice, are marked in hollow tick marks. Hollow circles, likewise, are found in

407 Ibid., juan 92, 2b.
Chapter 91. In an explanation (jie 解) of passages and mnemonic verses describing how to use a staff (gun 棍), the following general principle stating that one ought to attack an opponent between his own advances is marked with circles:

Basically, one has to know from what place the other will make his effort. I do not match his strength in this place, [but rather] endure it for the moment, and waiting until this first effort has mostly passed and the new effort has not yet started, and only then overcome him.

蓋須知他出力在何處、我不於此處與他闘力、姑且忍之、俟其舊力略過、新力未發、然後乘之。408

This “principle” is a remark on the strategy of hand-to-hand combat, rather than an instruction on how to move the human body to better execute a movement or skill. True to the nature of a system where what qualifies as a “general principle” and what qualifies as a specific, important piece of information is judged by a subjective reader, there is some overlap between the two categories.409 However, in “Training,” hollow tick marks do generally refer to specific instructions for embodying the skills, and hollow circles to strategic principles that led to victory in a fight. Mao Yuanyi demonstrates his own experience studying martial arts by marking what pieces of information are most useful to learning each skill, and which strategies most useful to winning a fight. Critical punctuation is used to move the text from the page to the body.

4.3.4 Punctuating “Military Supplies and Transport”

“Military Supplies and Transport” is even more diverse in the nature of its content than “Systems.” A general rule throughout each is that the lengthier the continuous prose a section

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408 Ibid., juan 91, 16b.
409 See, for example, the hollow circles on juan 91, page 16a, where specific instructions and general principles are mixed into one long passage.
contains, the more likely it is to host critical punctuation. Most of the use of critical punctuation in these chapters replicates practices seen elsewhere. The second halves of conditional statements are often marked with hollow tick marks, indicating that the action to be taken when a set of circumstances occurs is “key” to remember. In the first chapters on the “governance of camps” (yingzhì 營制) hollow tick marks are also used to mark numbers of what kinds of soldiers belong in units listed for a given camp formation. So, too, are tick marks used to highlight the amount of space and food required for soldiers under “calculations for camps” (yìngsuàn 營算). In the section on “land and camps” (yǐngdì 營地) different kinds of land (eg. mountains and plains) are underlined in solid black, followed by explanations of how one manages that kind of land (unmarked). In the entirety of “Supplies,” hollow circles rarely appear to mark “profound statements.” These sections are devoted to the nitty gritty practices of war, and thus, important facts are the most often marked with hollow tick marks. In one mini-preface to a sub-subsection on “War” (zhàn 戰), Mao addresses the material reality of the contents of “Supplies” and “War” in particular. He writes:

Master Mao says: All of Wu bei zhì speaks to war. Why then is it only in “Military Supplies and Transport” that there is a subsection on “War?” It is devoted to making war concrete. Other places that speak of it, some [speak to] setting up norms and methods in preparation, others [speak to] taking advantage of opportunities in the midst of transformations. But this is realistically speaking to what happens when armies meet.

These chapters are no longer speaking of general principles and norms, but rather of the specifics of war craft and supply. Throughout “Supplies,” which occupies Chapters 93 through 147, the two most common kinds of punctuation are solid lines marking vocabulary or topic changes, and

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410 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhì, juan 96, 1a.
hollow tick marks indicating key information to be used in the real world. Some chapters contain only punctuation marking grammatical divisions \((judou)\). In a section of \textit{Wu bei zhi} preoccupied with the technologies of attack, defense, rations, military farming, and supply trains, this is not unexpected given our working theory of when and why Mao’s punctuation marks are used. For much of “Supplies,” especially chapters that emphasize technologies of defense, attack, naval warfare and firearms, short pieces of text or itemized lists prevail, and are only punctuated for grammar. Here, \textit{judou} marks continue to demonstrate that Mao Yuanyi has read all of the text, but critical punctuation is used only to mark key information that commanders need to remember when turning their own textual expertise from theory to praxis, especially information hidden in long passages of prose.

In “Supplies,” there are, nonetheless, sections where Mao’s punctuation system appears in tandem and works with spacing to make long passages of prose text legible to a lay reader. The section on medicine in “Supplies” displays how the punctuation and spacing we explore here integrates disparate kinds of information for the reader and how it works together with the citation practices explored in Chapter 2. In Chapter 2, I noted that Mao Yuanyi cites Xu Dong, Tang Shunzhi, and Wang Minghe in chronological order. In the section on “wounds” \((jinchuang 金瘡)\), he quotes passages from texts by these authors explaining the etiology, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of wounds incurred in a military context. He then borrows from their texts (among others) to create a list of formulas for medicaments to treat wounds, their comorbidities, and to support the body in its healing process. Spacing and black tick marks for grammatical divisions are the only tools used to guide the reader through the formulas. However, solid black lines, hollow tick marks, and hollow circles are employed throughout the prose sections.
In the first passage quoted, from Xu Dong’s *Huqian jing*, black lines are used to underline items in lists. For example, Xu Dong lists the eight things a wounded patient should avoid: “**getting angry, laughing happily, speaking loudly, expending strength, wishful thinking, hot gruel or porridge, imbibing alcohol, and sour and salty foods**” (一曰嗔怒，二曰喜笑，三曰大言，四曰勞力，五曰妄想，六曰熱羹粥，七曰飲酒，八曰酸鹹). Xu Dong also lists nine places where a wound is an automatic death sentence, and four other situations where a wound isn’t treatable, also marked with solid lines.\(^{411}\) The last few lines of Xu Dong’s passage are marked with hollow tick marks: “Those whose pulse is deep but small live; those whose pulse is floating and large die. If that which has been injured is on a *yang* location, and the patient has lost excess blood, and the pulse is miniscule and slow, then those who are acutely ill will die.”\(^{412}\) The next passage is from Tang Shunzhi’s *Wu bian*. Its first three lines are mostly covered in hollow circles. These lines explain the relationship between wounds, which belong to the “wood” phase of the Five Phases, the four seasons, and various kinds of *qi* (as in matter). The next few lines are marked with hollow tick marks, and relate prognoses based on the color of the wound. After skipping the sentence that tells us that wounds, because they are made from wood and metal tools, affect the systems that belong to those phases (the pulmonary and stomach systems), tick marks point to a few sentences that describe digestive and pulmonary symptoms to look out for. Hollow circles return in the next sentence, which describes the theory behind why some patients with wounds sicken with “wind-splitting disorder” (*poshang feng* 破傷風):

“Because wind (*feng*) belongs to the hexagram “Xun” (巽) and the wood phase, if wind enters

\(^{411}\) Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 143, 2ab.

the wound opening, the pulmonary system (which is metal) will be conquered by what it should
control [wood], and will come down with ‘wind-splitting disorder.” This last is an
explanation of a general principle of medicine—how the pulmonary system will be affected by
poor care of a wound because of its status vis a vis “wind” in the Five Phases system. In Wang
Minghe’s passage, hollow tick marks return to mark specific symptoms of hypothetical
complications and their diagnoses. In the section on medicine, the use of hollow tick marks,
hollow circles, and black underlining has not varied widely from previous sections. Tick marks
point to specific actions to be taken under a given circumstance; hollow circles point to the
theory behind the actions; and black underlining points to lists of items to be remembered.
However, the entirety of “Supplies,” and especially the section on medicine, do put the
categories of “key” information and “profound” statements in stark contrast with one another,
highlighting the division of these items into theory and principles to keep in mind and actionable
information for a military expert’s use in “real” warfare. Mao’s punctuation performs this
expertise for his readers.

4.3.5 Punctuating “Record of Divination and Geography”

In “Systems” and “Supplies,” we saw Mao Yuanyi’s printed critical punctuation practice
categorize items of information into things theoretical and things actionable, the latter of which
were identified as “key,” reinforcing the notion that an expert reader looked for ways to apply
textual knowledge in practice. “Record of Divination and Geography” continues this pattern.
Critical punctuation is rare in this section, as there is a significant amount of information that is
neither difficult to interpret, nor prescriptive, but descriptive. Descriptive information that does

\[ \text{Ibid., 3a. The original reads: 蓋風所屬巽木、如風入瘡口、肺金反剋而成破傷風。} \]
not require action on the reader’s part to implement, or does not guide a decision that the reader might make, is not marked with critical punctuation. These descriptive sections do not require the guidance of an expert reader to decipher them.

For example, “Divination” occupies the first half of this section, Chapters 148 through 188, and “Geography” occupies Chapters 189–240. “Divination” begins with chapters describing divination methods based on observing natural phenomena: the sun, the moon, wind and rain, clouds, fog, the stars, the Five Phases, etc. With the exception of the chapters on divining by the stars, these chapters are primarily lists of if/then statements, where if X is observed, then the conclusion is Y. No decision or expert guidance is necessary here to implement the divination. However, this is not true of all divination methods in Wu bei zhī. Critical punctuation does not reappear in this section until Chapter 169, on divination by Taiyi 太乙 (a star), the first of the chapters on the “Three Cosmic Boards” (Sanshi 三式), the divination methods used by the Chinese Astronomical Bureau.414 These chapters have extensive punctuation, especially hollow tick marks on pieces of information critical to understanding the calendrical calculations involved or what one should do if one comes up with a certain result while divining. For example, in the section on the first of the Three Cosmic Boards, which discusses how to calculate time via the transit of the Taiyi star, the following calculation is made, wherein the definition of a sexagenary cycle (dazhoujian 大周天) and how to employ it is marked with hollow tick marks:

Taiyi stays in each constellation for three years. It travels through the eight constellations but doesn’t go through the center. Three times eight is 24, so this is one small sexagenary cycle. A grand sexagenary cycle is 240 years. Dividing it is also a method of calculating [this].

414 See Ho, Chinese Mathematical Astronomy, 3–4.
In a section giving an example problem of how to calculate where exactly in the sky Taiyi would be in the gengwu year of the Longqing reign (1560–1572), that is, 1570, the calculation begins with the jiazi year of the reign of the mythical emperor Tianhuang 天皇. Hollow tick marks point to the sentence, “Therefore the 43rd year of the Jiajing reign of the Great Ming Dynasty is the second jiazi year,” a turning point in the calculation, the closest jiazi year to 1570. The jiazi year is the first year of a sexagenary cycle. Because every 60 sexagenary cycles is matched to the movement of stars in the sky, in order to calculate where a star would appear in a given year, you would need to know the beginning of the closest sexagenary cycle. Lastly, in the sections discussing the use of the Taiyi method for military divination, for each possible result, a direction is given on how to deploy troops. This direction is marked with hollow tick marks. The tick marks point to the decision that ought to be made based on this somewhat complicated mathematical divination method.

As for the “geography” section of “Record of Divination and Geography,” there is no critical punctuation in the first two major sub-sections, “The Governed Realm” (fangyu 方輿) and “Military Border Towns” (zhenrong 鎮戎) except for black and hollow underlining, mostly of administrative units. The reader ought to know these for context, but they are not actions to be implemented or decisions to be made. The following two sections, “Coastal Defense” (haifang 海防) and “River Defense” (jiangfang 江防) contain extensive critical punctuation, which

415 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 169, 2b.
416 Ibid., 3b. The original reads: 故大明嘉靖四十三年為中元之甲子也。
follows the general pattern observed in previous sections, with tick marks allocated to specific recommendations for action, and hollow circles allocated to general principles that help guide those decisions. The last sections of “Record of Divination and Geography” on non-Han peoples contains no critical punctuation, possibly because none of the information therein includes actionable responses to situations, or principles that can be applied to a variety of situations. If we understand Mao Yuanyi’s punctuation as indicative of at least a conglomeration of reading experiences, then it is telling that his practice was to mark actionable knowledge rather than descriptive facts. Actionable knowledge was that to which the expert reader of an encyclopedic tome of technology and techniques attended. Therefore, throughout Wu bei zhi, Mao Yuanyi’s punctuation continues to enact a notion of expertise defined by the digestion of technical information in texts for the purpose of identifying how it might be applicable in the reader’s own time and space.

4.4 On Inconsistencies Both Inside and Outside Mao Yuanyi’s System

In the sections above, I have demonstrated that Mao’s punctuation system is largely coherent across the entirety of Wu bei zhi, even as it bends to accommodate the different kinds of information included in each section of the text. However, this is not to say the punctuation system is unequivocally consistent. No living practice can be entirely so. For example, in “Investigations,” in the first section on the history of Jin-dynasty military exploits (265–420), the second passage tells the story of the Jin-dynasty general Yang Hu’s 羊祜 (190–278 CE) treatment of the state of Wu and his relationship with Lu Kang 陸抗 (226–274 CE), the Wu general on the other side of the Jin-Wu border. The passage describes Yang Hu’s fair compensation of the treatment of the people of the border region for whatever his army took, and
his refusal to engage in surprise attacks. Part of one sentence is underlined with hollow circles indicating the profundity of his choices: “Among the generals were those who wanted to employ a trick maneuver. He often [gave them] good wine to drink causing them to be unable to speak” (將帥有欲進讒計者、輒飲以醇酒、使不得言). The rest of the passage describes the kind measures he took towards the populace and Lu Kang, whom he trusted. The accompanying marginal comment, states, “Strategizing like this, [Yang] Hu could then, without laboring, cause Wu to concede. What a pity he met a rival in [Lu] Kang” (祜如此著數便可不勞而服吳惜遇抗對手耳). Is the comment about the wine really the most “profound” part of this chapter? According to our inferred definition of “profound” in Mao Yuanyi’s world, described above, this might not quite fit the bill without a little forcing. It certainly is a demonstration of clever leadership, but it could also be construed as a critical decision that elsewhere Mao would have marked with hollow tick marks. Assuming that Mao Yuanyi maintained constant, exact standards for the circumstances under which he might apply each kind of punctuation is problematic at best.

Further, as noted above, Mao did not always see fit to provide critical punctuation at all. Many chapters in Wu bei zhi contain no critical punctuation, only judou partitions. Above, I mentioned that “Supplies” contains many such chapters. This is also true of “Systems.” In “Systems,” a marked change is noted in Chapters 84 through 88, the first chapters of “Teaching Skills.” These are the first five chapters on weaponry: bows, crossbows, straight swords, sabers, spears, ranseurs, shields, and langxiang (multi-tipped spears). These chapters contain no critical punctuation with the exception of solid lines marking item and movement names and topic

417 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 29, 1b.
418 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 29, 1b.
changes. Even these are minimal, especially in Chapters 84 and 85 where most of the material focuses on technologies of archery. In still other chapters, Mao Yuanyi borrows the systems of other expert readers. Chapters 88 through 90 on staffs and staff fighting are quoted from Cheng Zongyou. As noted in Chapter 1, Chapters 89 and 90 contain extensive critical punctuation, which Mao Yuanyi states he has copied from Cheng’s own work, precisely because he was an expert: “As for explanations of the Shaolin [method], none is as detailed as the summary by Cheng Zongyou of the modern New Capital” (少林之說，莫詳于近世新都程宗猷之闡宗).419 As an expert reader himself, Mao decided the text was already best interpreted by its original author.

We have already established that the meaning of punctuation varies across sections of *Wu bei zhi* as the content changes, but it is fruitful to demonstrate that these categories of punctuation were fluid and approximate at best. The fact that punctuation was approximate demonstrates a further aspect of reading technical treatises in the late Ming—or reading in high volume in the late Ming. Punctuation helped the reader and the punctuator experience the text, but experience changed from moment to moment. Punctuation was a living practice, and changed to best reflect the goals and experience of the expert reader.

### 4.5 Other Ming Punctuators and Readers

"Emphatic punctuation" in a technical text was not solely the purview of Mao Yuanyi, as evidenced by Cheng Zongyous work above, but it was rare. Mao Yuanyi’s punctuation practices borrow from other forms of criticism, text collection, reading and encyclopedism. There is common ground within Ming punctuation practices, if only for the prevalence of "emphatic

419 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi, juan* 88, 1a.
punctuation” in the genres of fiction and prose. These practices prevailed within Mao Yuanyi’s social circles. See, for example, Martin Huang’s analysis of Mao’s close friend and collaborator, Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1585–1637). Just as punctuation practices in Wu bei zhi varied slightly from section to section depending on the genre of the books excerpted to fill each chapter, punctuation practices vary between books depending on their genre.

Tang Shunzhi, whom Mao Yuanyi quotes extensively in Wu bei zhi, is often drawn upon for analyses of punctuation practices in non-technical genres in the late Ming. His system of punctuation is one of the few coherent "methods" (fa 法) from the Ming dynasty of which there is a surviving record. Guan Xihua uses Tang’s method as a representative example of those who favored the use of critical or emphatic punctuation. He points out that there was disagreement during this period as to whether or not using such punctuation distorted the meaning of a text, especially the Confucian classics. Some Ming scholars criticized people like Zhong Xing 鍾惺 (1574–1624), and Tan Yuanchun, of the Jingling School 竟陵派, and even Mao Kun, for being “most able to bury the spirit of the ancients” (最能埋沒古人精神) through critical punctuation of ancient poetry and the classics. Qing scholars later backed away from critical punctuation.421

420 Huang, “Author(ity) and Reader,” 47–48. Mao preserved two letters to Tan Yuanchun in Sishi ji, and Tan is frequently mentioned elsewhere therein by his courtesy name, Youxia 友夏, for example in a letter to Chen Jiru. See Mao Yuanyi “Yu Tan Youxia shu yi gengshen” 與譚友夏書一庚申 [First letter to Tan Youxia in 1620], in SSJ, juan 77, 10b–12b; “Yu Tan Youxia shu er guiyou” 與譚友夏書二癸酉 [Second letter to Tan Youxia in 1633], in SSJ, juan 77, 12b–15a; Chen Jiru: Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Chen Meigong shu yi gengshen” 與陳眉公書一庚申 [First letter to Chen Meigong in 1620], in SSJ, juan 77, 1a–2b.

421 Guan Xihua, Zhongguo gudai biaodian fuhao fazhan shi, 11–20, especially 19–20. The Jingling School was most linked to anti-classicism in late-Ming poetry, led by those fed-up with the demand to imitate models of the Qin, Han, and earlier. They emphasized, instead, Tang poetry and “obscure” styles. See Laughlin, The Literature of Leisure and Chinese Modernity, 10, 20, 34; Struve, “Huang Zongxi in Context: A Reappraisal of His Major
Timothy Clifford analyzes Tang Shunzhi's system—he calls it an "annotation method"—as part of his rise to fame as a model essayist in ancient style prose, whom many hopefuls for the civil examination emulated. Clifford writes, "Tang’s reading method, visually represented in these annotations, allowed readers to see the basic logic of ancient-style prose as Tang himself saw it; likewise, this key allowed readers to see the logic of Tang’s annotation method, and perhaps even incorporate it into their own reading practice."422 Clifford’s analysis confirms that Tang’s system focuses on dissecting the structure of an essay. Tang Shunzhi’s system, much like Mao Yuanyi and Cheng Zongyou’s systems, focuses on identifying important pieces of information, crucial sentences for comprehension, elegantly phrased passages, separation of topics etc.

Printed punctuation in other technical works, especially military treatises, indicates that Mao Yuanyi’s use of emphatic punctuation was somewhat unusual for its thoroughness. Most similar military books of the same period, if they have punctuation, it is grammatical only, and the compilers do not attempt to make the punctuation itself systematic. One exception to that rule is Cheng Zongyou’s record of the techniques used at Shaolin Temple to train men in fighting with a staff (gun 棍). In Wu bei zhi itself, Mao Yuanyi borrows Cheng’s punctuation system when quoting him. Three chapters of “Systems” are anomalous in this way. For chapters 88, 89, and 90, Mao Yuanyi uses material from Cheng Zongyou’s Methods of Staff Combat of Shaolin Writings,” 488–499; Clifford, “In the Eye of the Selector,” xxxvi, fn46; Lynn, “The Talent Learning Polarity in Chinese Poetics: Yan Yu and the Later Tradition,” 162, fn 17.

Temple (Shaolin gunfa 少林棍法). At the end of Chapter 90, Mao Yuanyi writes: “This chapter’s critical punctuation meticulously copies Mr. Cheng’s original edition. His explanatory notes are appended below” (此卷批點悉照程氏原本，附其凡例于後). Chapters 89 and 90 clearly follow the appended punctuation system, as nowhere else in Wu bei zhi are there double hollow circle marks (See Cheng Zongyou’s reproduced fanli in Figure 6), or punctuation on text that shares a frame with illustrations (Figure 7). According to Cheng’s explanatory notes, double hollow circles indicate important characters (zi zhong zhi yanmu 字中之眼目), but otherwise the marks Cheng uses are not dissimilar to Mao Yuanyi’s. Black lines indicate “names of staff postures” (gunshi zhi ming 棍勢之名); hollow lines indicate “names of staff methods” (gunfa zhi ming 棍法之名); hollow circles indicate “key parts of a sentence” (ju zhong zhi guanjian 句中之關鍵); and hollow tick marks indicate “things that reconcile [the text] above and below and cannot be neglected” (woxuan shang xia er buke hu zhe 斡旋上下而不可忽者). It is clear that Maos stated priorities in documenting his reading experience are quite similar to those of Cheng Zongyou.

While my search of printed punctuation in Ming-dynasty copies of military titles has been limited to libraries in North America and Taiwan, it allows us to begin thinking about what proportion of such books were punctuated by the compiler before printing in this period. Of nearly 20 surviving woodblock prints of military texts from the 16th and 17th centuries that I

423 See Mao’s introduction to juan 88, page 1a.
424 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 90, 16b.
425 The distinction between a “posture” and a “method” appears to be that a posture is a position held in the middle of a pattern of movements (fa).
426 Cheng Zongyou as quoted in Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, juan 90, 16ab. Compare with Cheng Zongyou, Shaolin gun fa chanzong ji 少林棍法禪宗集 [Methods of staff combat of Shaolin Temple], mulu, 2a.
observed in five North American libraries (aside from copies of *Wu bei zhi*), only two have printed punctuation: *Bing jing* (Military mirror), printed between 1621 and 1644, and *Gu fanglüe* (Ancient stratagems), printed in 1639. The former is held by Harvard-Yenching Library, the latter by University of Toronto's Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library. Others have handwritten punctuation, unclaimed by any particular reader and impossible to date. Most such punctuation is of the nature of *judou*—grammatical punctuation parsing pauses and clauses. This is not to say that "emphatic punctuation" isn't common in the Ming dynasty in other genres, but the enthusiasm for punctuating encyclopedic military texts or military collectanea with printed marks seems limited to the last two reigns of the Ming dynasty, which is likely true for most classical prose. In contrast, handwritten punctuation of texts had long been standard practice for readers.

Nothing in Tang Shunzhi, Cheng Zongyou, or Mao Yuanyi’s methods is explicitly devoted to grammatical division (*judou*) or semantic meaning. Rather, it is clear that Mao Yuanyi borrows from these predecessors who would mark the merit of a particular statement and mark places that were key to understanding the logic of a passage. Mao and Cheng took this a step further. Their concern was not just with the structure of the passage and understanding it, but identifying practicable information that might bridge the gap between page and real world.

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428 See footnotes 346 and 347.
4.6 Conclusion

Punctuation marks record reading experiences. Here, printed punctuation marks can be read as a performance of Mao Yuanyi’s cumulative, expert reading experiences with the texts collected in *Wu bei zhi*. By marking diverse kinds of information in like categories, Mao unifies the experience for the reader. For two kinds of punctuation, solid lines and hollow lines, their purpose remains fairly stable throughout, highlighting vocabulary items necessary for discourse on a topic and passages that summarize a topic. Throughout *Wu bei zhi* solid tick marks are least often employed, and fairly consistent in highlighting passages that are ambiguous, enigmatic, or otherwise difficult to understand. The most often used emphatic punctuation marks are the most telling: hollow circles and hollow tick marks. Across each of the five sections of *Wu bei zhi*, hollow circles indicate general principles of moral leadership or operation. In “Critiques of Military Formulae,” the principles of moral command of an army manifest quite differently than principles of strategy for hand-to-hand combat found in “Systems of Troop Formation and Training,” but what hollow circles have in common across the board is their relative attention to the more generalizable content of a passage relative to the specificities that are pointed out by hollow tick marks. Likewise, across *Wu bei zhi* hollow tick marks indicate an item or piece of information that is somehow “key,” not to understanding a passage, but to taking action. In “Critiques,” hollow tick marks identify critical decisions and actionable items of knowledge; in “[Historical] Investigations of Strategy,” they identify key decisions made that won or lost battles; in “Systems of Troop Formations and Training,” they identify specific pieces of information essential to implementing a given formation or teaching and learning a technique; in “Military Supplies and Transport” and “Record of Divination and Geography” they identify actions to be taken in a given situation. Throughout all of this, marginal comments from Mao
Yuanyi must often be read in conjunction with these marks to make sense of the larger picture and Mao’s goals as compiler and expert reader.

The constant juxtaposition of generalized principle and the specifics of praxis becomes more obvious as one moves from the beginning of *Wu bei zhi* to its end, where prescriptive information on how to strategize, lead an army, train soldiers, or execute any number of tasks increasingly gives way to kinds of knowledge that are obviously executable with human bodies in a physical space. In “Critiques” and “Investigations,” general principles and specific actions are pointed out in the text for the reader to digest and consider in the abstract, as one might if learning to be a commander. In “Systems” and “Supplies,” where soldiers can find information on how to train their bodies; here hollow tick marks reign as they emphasize how to take theory and make it embodied. Throughout *Wu bei zhi*, descriptive information is conveyed with a combination of illustrations and text, and often needs no emphatic punctuation like this. How can one, after all, mark a critical action that could be taken, or an important way of moving one’s bodies, or one’s soldiers’ bodies, in a list of facts about a region? This enactment of expertise, where the embodied is derived from the application of generalized principles from authoritative texts in specific ways, was specific to punctuation in technical treatises like *Wu bei zhi*. The next chapter will consider how *Wu bei zhi* should be categorized, not bibliographically, but for the work it performs as a technical treatise; whether other technical treatises of the period worked in similar ways; and whether they shared a common episteme that valued authoritative texts as generative of expert practice.
Table 2. Key to depictions of pre-modern punctuation in Chapter 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Stated meaning</th>
<th>Depiction in English translation and Chinese text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hollow circles        | Subtle (or profound) passage       | Wavy underlining represents hollow circles.  
如此劃線。                                                                  |
| Hollow tick marks     | Critically important passage       | Small dots indicate hollow tick marks.  
如此劃線。                                                                  |
| Hollow lines          | Summary                            | Underlining represents hollow lines.  
如此劃線。                                                                  |
| Solid lines           | Separates topics                   | **Bold font and underlining represents solid lines.**  
如此劃線。                                                                  |
| Solid tick marks      | Obscure (or enigmatic) passage     | Broken lines represent solid tick marks.  
如此劃線。                                                                  |

Based on the *fanli* after the prefaces of most copies of *Wu bei zhi*, prepared by Mao Yuanyi. See Figure 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Original text in <em>Wu bei zhi</em></th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>九變第八</td>
<td>The Nine Changes [No. 8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main text</td>
<td>孫子曰，凡用兵之法，將受命於君，合軍聚眾，圮地無舍，衢地合交，絕地無留，圍地則謀，死地則戰。</td>
<td>Sun-tzu said: 'In general, the strategy for employing the military is this. After the general has received commands from the ruler, united the armies, and assembled the masses: &quot;Do not encamp on entrapping terrain;&quot; &quot;Unite with your allies on focal terrain;&quot; &quot;Do not remain on isolated terrain;&quot; &quot;Make strategic plans for encircled terrain;&quot; &quot;On fatal terrain you must do battle.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlinear</td>
<td>此言用兵用九變，而略舉其五事如此，言水毀之圮地不可止，四通之衢地宜盟會。○一云，當以前篇高陵勿向八句，及此篇絕地無留一句，其為九變，而此叚圮地無舍四句，特九地篇文，誤在此耳。</td>
<td>This says that in employing the military one uses the Nine Changes, and it approximately raises five things as follows: it says, on water-inundated 'entrapping terrain,' one cannot stay; on focal terrain that is open to the four directions, meet your allies. ○ There is a theory that says that the 8 sentences beginning with “Do not approach high mountains” from the previous chapter plus the sentence beginning with “Do not remain on isolated terrain” in this chapter, these are the Nine Changes. But the other four sentences from “Do not encamp on entrapping terrain” are specifically the text of the &quot;Nine Terrains.&quot; The mistake is in this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Eyebrow commentary| 此說非也，此論變，非論地也。五地及五有所不，共十變。[PAGE BREAK]也大略舉數曰九。 | This theory is incorrect. This [passage] speaks of changes, not terrain. The five terrains and the five "there are some that are nots" together, make 10 changes [PAGE BREAK] Here it just gives an approximate number, nine.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Original text in <em>Wu bei zhi</em></th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Main text | 途有所不由、軍有所不擊、城有所不攻、地有所不爭、君命有所不受、故將通於九變之利者、知用兵矣、將不通於九變之利、雖知地形、不能得地之利矣。 | “There are roads that are not followed.”
“There are armies that are not attacked.”
“There are fortified cities that are not assaulted.”
“There is terrain for which one does not contend.”
“There are commands from the ruler which are not accepted.”

“Thus the general who has a penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes knows how to employ the army. If a general does not have penetrating understanding of the advantages of the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the topography, he will not be able to realize the advantages of terrain.” [PAGE BREAK]

治兵不知九變之術、雖五利不能得人之用矣、是故智者之慮、必雜於利害、雜於利而務可信也。 | “One who commands an army but does not know the techniques for the nine changes, even though he is familiar with the five advantages, will not be able to control men.

“For this reason the wise must contemplate the intermixture of gain and loss. If they discern advantage [in difficult situations], their efforts can be trusted.” |

The main text of *Sunzi bingfa* uses Ralph Sawyer’s translation. See Ralph D. Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, p. 171. The original text in *Wu bei zhi* can be found here: *Wu bei zhi, juan 1*, pp.13a–14a.
Figure 1. “Explanatory Notes on Critical Punctuation” in *Wu bei zhi*.

“Wu bei zhi pidian fanli” 武備志批點凡例 (Explanatory notes on critical punctuation in *Wu bei zhi*). Photo of a 1621 woodblock print of *Wu bei zhi* held by the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library. (*Courtesy of the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.*)
Figure 2. Punctuation in the Wuzi section of Wu bei zhi, juan 2, 2b.

Photograph from what is most likely a Daoguang-era (mid-19th century) moveable-type copy of Wu bei zhi.
(Courtesy of the special collections of the East Asia Library of University of Washington Libraries.)
Figure 3. "The Nine Changes" (*Jiu bian 九變*), as printed in *Wu bei zhi, juan 1, 12b–14a.*

Photo of University of Washington 19th-century copy of *Wu bei zhi. (Courtesy of the special collections of the East Asia Library of University of Washington Libraries.)*
Figure 4. “Huangdi Woqi Encampment,” in *Wu bei zhi, juan 52, 16b–18a*.

Photo of University of Washington 19th-century copy of *Wu bei zhi*. (Courtesy of the special collections of the East Asia Library of University of Washington Libraries.)
Figure 5. Medical formulas in *Wu bei zhi, juan* 143, 7b–8a.

Photo of a 1621 woodblock print of *Wu bei zhi* held by the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.  
*(Courtesy of the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.)*
Figure 6. Cheng Zongyou's punctuation system in *Wu bei zhi*, juan 90, 16b–17a.

Photo of University of Washington 19th-century copy of *Wu bei zhi*. (Courtesy of the special collections of the East Asia Library of University of Washington Libraries.)
Figure 7. Cheng Zongyou's punctuation used in illustrations in *Wu bei zhi, juan 90, 5b–6a. 1621.*

Photo of a 1621 woodblock print of *Wu bei zhi* held by the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.
(Courtesy of the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.)
Chapter 5: *Wu bei zhi* and Statecraft Compendia: an Emerging Genre

5.1 Introduction

So far, this dissertation has looked at different practices involved in the production and reading of *Wu bei zhi*. The study of citation and organization practices in Chapter 2 revealed *Wu bei zhi*'s methods of knowledge organization and verification. Chapter 3 followed the social practices of Mao Yuanyi as they shaped an expert identity for him and his contemporaries’ understanding of the title *Wu bei zhi*. Chapter 4 explored the use of critical punctuation and printed “eyebrow” commentary in *Wu bei zhi*. This chapter asks how distinctive these features were to *Wu bei zhi*, finding that individual features observed in *Wu bei zhi* throughout the last chapters are not unique; they appear in other encyclopedic statecraft books. *Wu bei zhi*, by dint of shared practices and their results, rightfully belongs to an emerging genre of statecraft compendia and collectanea that aim at the comprehensive collection and systematic organization of knowledge. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a unique conglomeration of the intellectual practices appeared that can be observed in *Wu bei zhi* and other statecraft compendia. While *Wu bei zhi* shared the bibliographical category “military books” (*bingshu*) with earlier military texts, this was due to shared content as opposed to format and social function. Although “statecraft compendia” was not an actors’ bibliographical category, I use it here to describe texts with which *Wu bei zhi* shared far more in its form, social function, and editorial practices than other books about military affairs.

Combining the contributions of multiple scholars of genre theory, Amy Devitt has proposed a definition of genre that helps articulate the similarities between *Wu bei zhi* and other similar compendia and their place in Ming book culture. Specifically, we can think of genre as
“response to recurring rhetorical situation” involving common “purposes, participants, and themes.” In other words, writers respond to like situations with like practices and modes of production, be they rhetorical, editorial, social, or reading. For our consideration of how *Wu bei zhi* fits into the late Ming context and its relationship to other, similar books, it is helpful to consider *Wu bei zhi* and other statecraft compendia as part of a single genre, and to isolate practices that are shared between them. In this case, statecraft compendia engage in citation and editorial practices that turn a collection of specialized, technical knowledge into a “library of information;” in social practices that situate the compiler as an expert or part of a community of experts; and sometimes in punctuation and reading practices that identify how to apply textual information to real-life situations. To warrant the application of the descriptor “statecraft,” the content was in some way applicable to governance.

There is something unique about the way privately compiled statecraft texts were produced, structured, socially deployed, and read in the seventeenth century. In point of fact, it is the combination of encyclopedism along the model of *leishu* with technical subjects of statecraft that stands out in this period. This chapter distinguishes between privately compiled texts and imperially sponsored texts because imperially sponsored texts did not have to justify their own existence in the same way as others did. However, imperial collectanea, too, shared features of knowledge validation and production with these other tomes.

This chapter will use the categories of praxis analyzed in the prior three chapters to identify practices important to encyclopedism, concrete studies, and statecraft in the seventeenth century. *Wu bei zhi* and other statecraft compendia were also situated in their own prolific

technical, textual traditions that included a variety of formats and genres addressing a common topic. The utility of *Wu bei zhi*-style encyclopedic texts was contested in this period by other authors, even described by another military author as impractical relative to other texts. As such, this chapter will first outline differences between the approaches of compilers of other kinds of military texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth century and those employed in *Wu bei zhi*. It will then compare the practices of organization, citation, punctuation, and social exchange used in and for *Wu bei zhi* with other encyclopedic texts identified by their compilers as part of the tradition of “statecraft.” “Encyclopedic” here describes texts that endeavor to achieve “comprehensive and systematic knowledge-ordering” via common “motifs and ambitions and techniques.” I argue that practices of encyclopedism and statecraft walked hand in hand only in the seventeenth century under the auspices of concrete studies. This is especially true of compendia addressing technical and technological topics relevant to statecraft and concrete studies such as manufacturing and craftwork, state ritual and music, agricultural practice and technologies, policy, and calendrics, which comprise the contents of the statecraft compendia used as case studies in this chapter. More similarities exist in the practices of compilation and organization between *Wu bei zhi* and contemporary compendia of statecraft and technical knowledge than with military books preceding it.

Compilers of private statecraft compendia pursued “concrete knowledge” and actively asserted their utility to the state. They collated both the newest and the oldest information available on the technique or technology under discussion using historical and contemporary

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430 See the discussion of Zhang Zilie’s assessment of Yu Maoheng’s *Gu fanglüe* below.


432 For a general discussion of the context of statecraft and the relevant scholarship on statecraft and concrete studies in this period, refer back to Chapter 1, pp. 15–22.
success as concrete proof of the veracity of a technique or technology. They historicized this knowledge within the context of other texts familiar to the literate elite. Compilers sometimes used printed punctuation to provide a coherent reading experience. These titles further enacted the social and intellectual identity of their compilers in the act of their collaborative collation, printing, and promotion, whether before or after the death of their titular compiler. These shared characteristics suggest the emergence of a genre, though not a bibliographic category, in the seventeenth century due to a common response of literati authors and compilers to a struggling government. Specifically, these compilers responded to the need for expertise, both textual knowledge and experience, by offering their own in encyclopedic form.

5.2 The Books

The first part of this chapter demonstrates that *Wu bei zhi* was in fact different from its military-book predecessors in the sixteenth century. The chapter compares *Wu bei zhi*’s collection and organization practices to as many sixteenth-century military books as possible. These titles are too numerous to list here. *Wu bei zhi* comprehensively summarized the entire “library of information” to which these books belonged. It shared much in content with these texts, but very little in structure. For the second part of this chapter, the seventeenth-century statecraft texts to be compared with *Wu bei zhi* are *Nongzheng quanshu* 農政全書 (Complete work on agricultural administration); *Chongzhen lishu* 崇禎曆書 (Calendrical treatises of the Chongzhen reign); 433 *Yuelü quanshu* 樂律全書 (Complete work on music); *Tiagong kaiwu* 天

433 The translation of this title is borrowed from Chu, “Archiving Knowledge,” 159–184.
工開物 (The works of heaven and the inception of things)\textsuperscript{434}; and Huang Ming jingshi wenbian (Compilation of writings on statecraft of the August Ming).\textsuperscript{435} Each of these texts from the late Ming address a technical topic of concern to the governance of the Ming state, specifically: agricultural technology and administration, state ritual music and dance, craft and manufacturing techniques and technologies, and exemplar policy writings. This chapter asks, what, exactly, distinguishes these texts in their format, compilation practices, citation practices, punctuation, rhetoric and epistemic assumptions from what came before on similar topics? Wu bei zhi is both representative of these characteristics and unique in its aggregation of all of them in one book.

5.3 Other Military Books

In my introduction, I noted that “military books” (bingshu 兵書) were usually considered a bibliographic category within the “masters” (zi 子) branch. This is where Wu bei zhi was generally categorized, but it rarely shared editorial practices with these texts, only content. Here, I will compare military books of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, arguing that there is cause to think that practices changed subtly in this period to bring military writing in line with other kinds of textual compilation of technical texts also conceived of as part of the concrete studies and statecraft traditions. I will argue that the encyclopedism observable in Wu bei zhi and other seventeenth century statecraft texts was emblematic of early seventeenth-century impulses

\textsuperscript{434} This translation of Tiangong kaiwu is borrowed from Schäfer, The Crafting of the 10,000 Things, 2.

\textsuperscript{435} Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsueh-lun Chang make a similar comparison between the authors of these statecraft texts, but these scholars frame these texts as part of a late-Ming “scientific revolution,” a teleological narrative that neglects seventeenth-century categories. See Chang and Chang Crisis and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century China, 285–303.
to exhaustively compile information and practices thereof. Sixteenth-century texts differ from those of the seventeenth by virtue of their relatively small aims: they are topically targeted, devoted to the curvatures of a particular time and space in the sixteenth century, a time when a new kind of warfare demanded summary of its own empirical success. Other pre-seventeenth-century Ming texts republished military classics and their better-known commentaries, or compiled examples of historical military successes. *Wu bei zhi*, took a different approach, in which all of these aims were combined.

Other scholars have distinguished between sub-genres of military books based on content, structure, and aims.\(^{436}\) Still others have investigated the social production of knowledge between military experts in the sixteenth century.\(^{437}\) Like many genres, military books increased in number and circulation during the sixteenth-century print boom. A complete enumeration of them would be impossible. I’ll focus instead on those cited most often in *Wu bei zhi*. Not all military books published contemporaneously with *Wu bei zhi* were encyclopedic in structure, aims, and content, but such books were new in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Authors of books of encyclopedic scale debated over what exactly the most useful content and format was for such tomes.

Let us begin, first, with a contemporary’s critique of *Wu bei zhi*. The existence of a trend in the style of knowledge organization is perhaps best demonstrated by those who identified it and disagreed with its utility. In 1639, the editors of the posthumously printed *Gu fanglüe* 古方略 (Ancient strategems) praised Yu Maoheng’s 余懋衡 (1561–1629, j.s. 1592) book in contrast with earlier military books, including *Wu bei zhi*. One editor, Zhang Zilie 張自烈 writes:

\(^{436}\) Xie Wenchao, *Ming dai bing shu yan jiu*.

\(^{437}\) Noordam, “The Soldier as a Sage.”
He consulted and included copious works, collating their hidden errors, and from place to place inserting my own shortsighted opinions. It [the book] is far more practical. Old printed books like the Military Classics,438 [Tang Shunzhi’s] Wu bian, Bing heng (兵衡),439 Jiang jian (The General’s Mirror 將鑒),440 or Bing ji lei zuan (兵機)441 Wu bei zhi, or Wu hou quan shu (Complete book on the Marquis of Wu 武侯全書),442 or the unofficial annalistic histories—none of these can be spoken of in the same sentence with it. In the past, Fu Bi (富弼, 1004–1083) was asked to establish military studies. He gathered ancient military books and made many gentleman talk about them and practice them, knowing broadly the successes and failures of the past and present. Fan Zhongyan (989–1052) said to Di Qing (1008–1057):443 “The generals do not know the past and present. They are only ignorant and courageous.” Di Qing from this moment forced himself to read and comprehend all military methods since the Qin and Han dynasties. Our first Emperor, Taizu, discussed strategy with his generals, commanding them, “It is not that the senior officials cannot make war, but that in order to decide measures appropriate to the times, their knowledge is insufficient. It is appropriate to keep close the Confucians, take from the books of the ancients, and listen to their opinions to supply knowledge.”

438 Sawyer, The Seven Military Classics.

439 Bing heng most likely refers to Yu Delong’s work. See Yu Delong 喻龍德, Yuzi shi san zhong mi shu bing heng 喻子十三種秘書兵衡 [Master Yu’s thirteen secret books on the military standards] (China: Zheng Dajing 鄭大經, 1621–1627), Harvard-Yenching Library, Special Collections, call no. T8917 6202.

440 This shortened title most likely refers to Jiang jian lun duan 將鑒論斷 [Discussions of the general’s mirror]. SKDCD, 1621.

441 This refers to one of two titles, either Bingji leizuan 兵機類纂, by Zhang Longyi 張龍翼, or Bingji yaojue 兵機要訣, by Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562–1633). See SKDCD, 1631 for the former. Xu Guangqi, Bingji yao jue 兵機要訣 [Essential mnemonics for military startegies], in Xu Guangqi quan ji 徐光啟全集 [Complete works of Xu Guangqi], volume 3.


443 Fan Zhongyan and another Song official praised Di Qing’s talents. Fan Zhongyan gave him a copy of the Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals, and said this to him. See the biography of Di Qing in Tuo Tuo et al., Songshi, juan 290, 9718.
Zhang Zilie critiques not just *Wu bei zhi*, but most of the books it relies on and other similar encyclopedic tomes for being impractical because they are essentially indigestible to an audience of generals seeking to learn strategy. *Gu fanglüe*, unlike other books, Zhang says, is useful to distribute to military officials across the empire and outside it.\(^{445}\) Precisely because of their reliance on literati conventions of organization, citation, and encyclopedism, books like *Wu bei zhi* and its predecessors are deemed useless. Rather, mini stories about strategic moments extracted from histories are the way to teach the semi-literate. That is what *Gu fanglüe* aims to do. This critique is quite useful for understanding what made *Wu bei zhi* and others like it so different from the late sixteenth-century works of people like Qi Jiguang and Yu Dayou. *Wu bei zhi* collects useful information, but in its size, organization, and demands for classical literacy, some felt it was of no use to commanders in the field. Zhang Zilie writes as a person who publishes a style of instructive military text in order to remedy the problems of new knowledge organization schemes evident in contemporary texts like *Wu bei zhi*. This style resembles older compilations of biographies of generals, but differs in that it divides its topics according to event rather than individual. *Gu fanglüe* models itself after *Wu bei zhi*’s second section, “Investigations” (*zhanlüe kao* 騰略考), in that its subject of discussion is historic strategic events, but it also attaches a strategist’s name to each entry.

\(^{444}\) Zhang Zilie 張自烈, “Chongding *Gu fanglue yuanqi* 重定古方略緣起” in *Gu fanglue* 古方略, 1639, Cheng-yu Tung Library, University of Toronto Libraries, 1a–1b.

\(^{445}\) Ibid., 1b.
In Chapter 6, I will explore how modern reader reception and contemporary reader reception differ for *Wu bei zhi*, arguing that *Wu bei zhi* has a legacy greater than its initial reputation. Its initial reception, as seen above, was not unequivocally positive. Zhang Zilie critiques it, military classics, and other books of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century for a lack of pragmatism in the delivery of its information. Some of the books quoted in *Wu bei zhi*, examined in Chapter 2, such as the *Seven Military Classics* and their expositions, are under attack here, as well as books by contemporaries of Mao Yuanyi—any of the books retaining somewhat encyclopedic practices of information collection or not otherwise making strategy easily digestible. Technical manuals, such as those by Qi Jiguang and Yu Dayou of the sixteenth century, are left alone. If efficacy of information organization is Zhang Zilie’s concern, then we must define what Zhang and others each understood to be effective information delivery strategies, and for whom.

What organization and information delivery strategies were used in these other books that Zhang Zilie includes in his critique of contemporary military books? Does this overlap with categories modern scholars have ascribed to the military books in this period? Xie Wenchao, for example, categorizes the military books of the Ming dynasty according to their content and organizational strategies. If content and organizational practice were the two criteria most salient to both contemporaries and scholars like Xie, where do these overlap? Xie identifies six categories of Ming military books: books on strategy; training manuals; books on firearms (and other technology); military “category books” (*leishu* 類書); and all-inclusive military books. She includes *Wu bei zhi* in the last of these categories, and books like *Wu bian*, by Tang Shunzhi, in the “category books” category. Exactly what distinguishes *Wu bian* from *Wu bei zhi*, in my opinion, has more to do with the absence of comprehensive synthesis in *Wu bian* and its presence
in *Wu bei zhi* than a difference in their format. If *Wu bian* can be said to be a “category book” more so than *Wu bei zhi*, it is such because its categories are single characters in contrast with the three-character phrases that *Wu bei zhi* chooses to title its five broad thematic sections. Fundamentally, however, they each take topics of administrative, strategic, or technical interest to the military, and append quotations from famous books underneath thematic category headings. *Wu bei zhi* uses subcategories where *Wu bian* does not. Zhang Zilie, in his critique of contemporary military texts, groups *Wu bian* and *Wu bei zhi* together. He finds this “category book” or encyclopedic format to be of little utility.

At first glance, it is not entirely clear why Zhang Zilie thinks so highly of Yu Maoheng’s *Gu fanglūe* in contrast to others like *Bingji leizuan*, which also uses historical anecdotes to illustrate stratagems, or *Jiang jian lunduan*, which evaluates highly successful individual strategists in chronological order.446 Turning to the explanatory notes, also by Zhang Zilie, we see that he speaks of the “method of writing by outline” (*gangmu fa* 綱目法). *Gangmu* is used in many titles, and describes a format where title headings and summaries (*gang*) are written in large font, and detailed explanations, whether commentary or narrative, are written in smaller font (*mu*). Other authors translate titles including “*gangmu*” as “classified” or “systematic.” Zhang Zilie writes that *Gu fanglūe* adheres to this format:

> The method of writing *gangmu*: things that touch upon the evolution of military systems and instances of governance by ministers and eunuchs bringing disorder, one or two are recorded as warnings. As for the historical writings of scholars across the ages, those that mutually develop with stratagems are all selected and recorded separately. In order to distinguish between where these events happen, see the small notes where phonological explanations of state and place names are listed. *Gu fanglūe* does not speak through people. When it comes to historical rebellions and bandits, the likes of the followers of Murong, Tuoba, Nian Mohe, Wang Mang, Yuwen Huaji, and Zhu Ci, their plans are cunning but insufficient, and so are not recorded. Including those of men of later

446 See Yong Rong et al., *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, 2059 and 2050 respectively.
generations who were well versed in martial affairs, it is fitting to follow the example of Han Shizhong and Yue Fei, fitting to [strive to] be as good as Fang Shu and Zhao Hu of the Western Zhou.

In this quotation, Zhang reemphasizes the kind of content excerpted for inclusion in this text—biographical stories only. These people do not speak for themselves through texts, as Qi Jiguang or Yu Dayou might, but rather are spoken about.

So, what exactly, was different about the books Zhang Zilie intended to criticize and this book of Yu Maoheng that he boasted about? Format, excerption practices, and mnemonic devices all differ. Yu Maoheng’s Gu fanglüe lists the names of people as its organizing principle—they are the “gang” and their stories are the “mu.” Zhang Zilie assumes that readers will remember strategy by remembering narratives of specific people excerpted from histories. Wu bei zhi and Wu bian include such kinds of narratives, but they are not organized by person, but chronologically according to source. It is clear why he disapproves of these two. They frequently excerpt from books that are compiled “by people making speeches” (yi ren fayan 一人發言), by people discoursing on how to execute a technique rather than demonstrating it in narrative.

What of the other texts? Bìng hēng can be dismissed for its failure to achieve comprehensive coverage—it is merely a compilation of short, secret texts. Jiàng jiān lunduan evaluates generals in chronological order, but it was written in the Song dynasty, and so it too fails to be comprehensive. Likewise, it tells of all the exploits of an individual general, rather

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than analyzing one instance of his success as in *Gu fanglüe*. It is hard for the reader, presumably, to draw useful information from that. “Bingji” might refer to *Bingji leizuan*, by Zhang Longyi, or *Bingji yao jue* by Xu Guangqi, both of the seventeenth century. The second compiles only mnemonics. Although the first also compiles anecdotes of successful strategy, its “gang,” or major categories, are all kinds of strategy, for example, “Opening the gates, but doubting the enemy,” or “Attacking the enemy in the rain.” They are not organized according to the person of note who might aid in remembering their utility. What of *Wu Hou quanshu*? An edition of this book was published in 1638, the same year as *Gu fanglüe*. What drew Zhang Zilie’s contempt? “*Wu Hou*” refers to the Duke of Wu, alternatively, Zhuge Liang. While history, *Gu fanglüe* argues, is essential to the project of learning about military strategy, a compilation of the entire oeuvre of a single ancient figure hardly makes for decent variety.

The texts that Zhang criticizes in the same space as *Wu bei zhi* all have faults, though “encyclopedism” as a fault is limited to *Wu bian* and *Wu bei zhi*. These two books, of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries respectively, fail to organize the material in a way that facilitates the study of military techniques, technology, or strategy in a way legible to non-literati readers. This effort at complete, erudite encyclopedism, organized legibly for elite literati, is characteristic of a particular strain of statecraft in the late Ming, where exhaustive collection and systematic organization took precedence over legibility for the lay reader.

Of the books that Zhang Zilie critiques, only one can be said to be directly excerpted in *Wu bei zhi*, that is, *Wu bian* by Tang Shunzhi. The implicit critique of both works is that their chosen format and content were both not useful to the reader. It is therefore relevant to ask when attention to exhaustive collection of materials and their systematic organization became important standards for books on technical knowledge. For if there is one thing that differentiates
Wu bei zhi and Wu bian from Gu fanglüe, aside from formatting, it is that the former address issues of praxis, techniques and technologies, and Gu fanglüe does not. Wu bei zhi, Wu bian, and other late sixteenth century books, like Wang Minghe’s Dengtan bijiu, all belong to a period when the project of organizing and collecting texts on specific techniques was key to technical knowledge production and circulation.

We saw in Chapter 2 that the library shaped by Wu bei zhi relied on different kinds of sources in each of its sections depending on the topic addressed. Mao Yuanyi’s project in Wu bei zhi was to comprehensively collect highly specific kinds of information into a coherent system. In this process, Mao Yuanyi relied both on books that addressed only one particular set of military techniques or technologies and books that sought to comprehensively address all known categories of military knowledge. For example, the first section of Wu bei zhi, “Critiques” (Bingjue ping) relied entirely on the Seven Military Classics, the second, “Investigations,” entirely on histories. The third, “Systems” (Zhenlian zhi) and fourth, “Supplies” (Junzi sheng), relied heavily on military books of the Ming dynasty both training manuals and books like Wu bian. Even when explicating strategies, techniques, or practices dating to earlier periods, Mao Yuanyi excerpted from Ming-dynasty reprints of earlier military books and Ming commentaries to do so. For example, “Systems of Troop Formations and Training” and “Military Supplies and Transport” both rely heavily on texts targeting specific techniques and technologies. Yu Dayou and Qi Jiguang’s works on troop formations, drilling, and command hierarchy are particularly prevalent. However, for “Systems,” Mao is also heavily reliant on Zhao Benxue and Yu Dayou’s mid-fifteenth-century reprinted expansion of Wujing zongyao (Zeng Gongliang, 999–1078), where both the original and the expansion aim for more comprehensive coverage of military topics. For parts of “Supplies,” Wu bei zhi is composed primarily of excerpts of other books that
claimed comprehensive coverage of technical subjects (*Huqian jing*, *Dengtan bijiu*, *Wu bian*). Below I will show how the format and content of *Wu bei zhi* differed from both technical texts of limited length and scope and earlier attempts at exhaustive collection of military materials.

Relying on the work done in Chapter 2, we can compare the format and rhetoric used in *Wu bei zhi* with the shorter, highly specific technical works it quotes. The later sections of *Wu bei zhi* on divination and geography rely more heavily on technical works specific to those disciplines, but that are not necessarily “military books.” The sample of military books that are most heavily excerpted in *Wu bei zhi* is actually quite small. Those that might fall into the category of technical, military works are as follows: *Jixiao xinshu* by Qi Jiguang; *Xingjun xuzhi* 行軍須知 (Necessary knowledge for administering an army); *Shilü tigang* 師律提綱 (Outline of army regulations); *Jian jing* by Yu Dayou, and the works of Cheng Zongyou in

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448 SKDCD, 1625.

449 Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi*, juan 68, 3a–9a. A few extant copies of *Shilü tigang* are held in Japan. One each is held at Kyushu University Library, Kyoto University Library, and University of Tsukuba Library, Central Library. For Kyushu University Library, see the online catalog of Kyushu University Library, accessed 31 May 2019, http://hdl.handle.net/2324/1001562650. For Kyoto University Library, see the online catalog of the Kyoto University Library, KULine accessed 31 May 2019, https://m.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/webopac/BB05066011. For University of Tsukuba Library, see the online catalog for the University of Tsukuba Library, Tulips, accessed 31 May 2019, https://www.tulips.tsukuba.ac.jp/opac/volume/1037119. The Kanseki Database lists several further copies at other libraries in Japan. Zengoku Kanseki dētabēsu 全國漢籍データベース [Kanseki Database], accessed 14 July 2019, http://kanji.zinbun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/kanseki?query=%E5%B8%AB%E5%BE%8B%E6%8F%90%E7%B6%B1. Both *Shilü tigang* and *Xingjun xuzhi* can be found in *Jiang wu quanshu* 講武全書 [Complete work on discussing the martial], in SKWS, series 6, vol. 13. A manuscript copy of *Jiang wu quanshu* is held in the National Archives of Japan Digital Archive [Kokuritsu kōpun shokan dijitaru ākaibu 国立公文書館デジタルアーカイブ], accessed 14 July, 2019, https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/image/M2013082920183499458.

*Gengyu sheng ji* 耕餘剩技 (*Planting excess leftover technologies*), a combination of his three books on weaponry with a preface dated to 1621.451

These books are not, like *Wu bei zhi*, composed of quotations. Rather, they claim to be the words of their named authors. For example, each chapter of *Jixiao xin shu* bears a single title, and its contents are an essay on an aspect of troop recruitment and training.452 The chapters are organized into broader sections named after the “Six Arts” (*liu yi* 六藝), namely, ritual, music, music, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics. The essays in each of these sections have little to do with their section titles, which are merely used as a way of grouping like chapters under a generic heading. Qi Jiguang’s other work, *Lianbing shiji* 練兵實紀 (*True records of training soldiers*), is intended to be memorized and read aloud to illiterate soldiers. *Jian jing* still exists as preserved in *Jixiao xin shu*, and is mostly comprised of mnemonic songs for training with swords. *Xingjun xuzhi* appears in several late-Ming and early-Qing library catalogues. In one it is recorded being two chapters in length. In *Quwei Zhai wenji* 去偽齋文集 (*Collected writings of the House of Expelling Falsehood*), Lü Kun records his preface to this book, and says, quite simply, it will teach you the three things you need to know not to die in war.453 Like Qi Jiguang’s work, *Xingjun xuzhi* and *Shilü tigang* are primarily composed of essays and lists of information, not quotations from other authors. These books, given their limited content and

451 Record of *Gengyu shengji* can be found in Huang Yuji, *Qianqing tang shumu*, 355.
format, are different in character from *Wu bei zhi*. While *Wu bei zhi* uses the language of “utility” and “concrete” information, and some of these texts do too, these books address specific skills of concrete utility in particular circumstances. *Wu bei zhi* addresses all possible useful skills.

Other books that *Wu bei zhi* excerpts also attempt comprehensive coverage of knowledge relevant to military command. The most oft-cited books include the Song-dynasty *Wujing zongyao* (Zeng Gongliang); its sixteenth-century expansion, *Chongkan xu wujing zongyao* (Zhao Benxue, Yu Dayou); *Huqian jing* (Xu Dong, Song dynasty); *Wu bian* (Tang Shunzhi, late sixteenth century); and *Dengtan bijiu* (Wang Minghe, 1599). The claim of this chapter is that *Wu bei zhi* is representative of a more explicit encyclopedism not prevalent until the seventeenth century and broadly exercised by authors of statecraft treatises. What, then, distinguishes these earlier attempts at comprehensiveness from *Wu bei zhi* and other seventeenth-century statecraft texts? *Wu bei zhi*’s encyclopedism differs from earlier “comprehensive” military texts in its attention to curating reader experience. Above, encyclopedism was defined as the comprehensive and systematic organization of information. Here, “systematic organization” is further defined as the curation of reader experience to facilitate finding individual categories and sources of information.

Zhao Benxue and Yu Dayou’s expansion exclusively discusses troop formations and pictures to supplement them. Many of these series of text and pictures are replicated in *Wu bei zhi*. The Song-dynasty *Wujing zongyao*, alternatively, is comprised of two parts, the “Former Collection” (*qianji* 前集) and “Latter Collection” (*houji* 後集). The “Former Collection” covers “systems” (*zhidu* 制度), border defense, attack, formations and training. Each chapter is titled
with one of these super-categories.\textsuperscript{454} Each subcategory contains an essay on its titular topic. The edition included in the \textit{Siku quanshu} includes tables of contents at the beginning of each chapter, as do most books entered in the \textit{Siku quanshu}. It does not contain a comprehensive table of contents, though others printed in the late Ming do.\textsuperscript{455} Zhao and Yu’s expansion differs in that it includes a detailed table of contents so that a reader can flip directly to the part of a chapter containing the desired essay or illustration. However, these essays and illustrations focus entirely on troop formations (\textit{zhen} 阵), and are organized chronologically but with no larger subsuming categories. \textit{Huqian jing}, also a Song-dynasty text, does include a detailed table of contents. Where \textit{Wujing zongyao} at least gives topical headings (e.g. “Systems”) to its chapters, \textit{Huqian jing} does not. Its essays, likewise, are not organized under any recognizable grand categorical schemata, but rather are simply explanations of individual military concepts such as \textit{tiangong} 天功 (the duties of a king); \textit{dili} 地利 (advantages of terrain); \textit{ren yong} 人用 (making use of people), etc. These varied approaches to tables of contents were often decided by the publisher of a given edition rather than the author or compiler. What distinguishes \textit{Wu bei zhi} from these earlier military texts is that the tables of contents were Mao’s idea—he includes them in letters to potential preface authors for reference in lieu of sending all 240 chapters of the book. Later

\textsuperscript{454} “[In \textit{Wujing zongyao}], when it comes to the circumstances of the borderland peoples, it all came from hearsay along the roads and mountains and rivers. Inspecting this [information] from today, it definitely contains many errors. The ‘Former Collection’ covers the systems of a single dynasty, and the ‘Latter Collection’ contains the gains and losses of past dynasties, some of which are indeed sufficient to use as textual evidence.” Yong Rong et al., eds., \textit{Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao}, \textit{juan} 99, 2041.

\textsuperscript{455} See, for example, a Wanli period (1573–1621) edition preserved in the Erudition database. Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮, \textit{Wujing zongyao} 武經總要, edited by Li Ding 李鼎 and printed by Tang Fuchun, (China: Jinling shulin 金陵書林), in \textit{GJK}. Note that tables of contents could have been added by publishers after a compiler submitted a manuscript.
statecraft compendia were more likely to show this sort of intentional care with information organization.

Two Ming-dynasty military texts explicitly cited in Wu bei zhi come closer to its encyclopedic aspirations, namely, Tang Shunzhi’s Wu bian (16th c.) and Wang Minghe’s Dengtan bijiu (1599). Wu bian, divided into two parts, six chapters each, uses only a table of contents at the beginning of each chapter, like Wujing zongyao. Its topic headings are as numerous as subheadings within Wu bei zhi, but its topic headings are one or two characters at best, and contain no subheadings detailing the structure of information within a giving heading. Likewise, Wu bian does not employ meta groupings like Wu bei zhi’s five divisions to organize its material. The reader must infer why in juan 1, information on “generals, soldiers, systems, training, commands, provisions,” etc. are grouped together, while juan 2 groups “war, attack and defense, attack, defense, earth, water,” etc. While there are logical explanations, they are not stated explicitly, and do not imitate common methods of organization one encounters in a library catalog. Wu bian quotes from many of the same texts used by Mao Yuanyi to compile Wu bei zhi. Like in Wu bei zhi, texts are alternately cited by title or author only, depending on which of those is better known (e.g. Huqian jing is cited by its author, “Xu Dong says”). However, Wu bian lacks introductions to sections that explicate the organizational choices made therein. This practice of introducing excerption and organizational practices appears only in Dengtan bijiu.

Of the texts that Mao Yuanyi chooses to quote in Wu bei zhi, it is Dengtan bijiu that shares the most structural similarities with Wu bei zhi. Its table of contents lists not just the topic of each chapter, but the subheadings within those chapters. While Dengtan bijiu lacks meta-headings for major sections (such as Wu bei zhi’s “Systems of Troop Formations and Training”), it still groups its topics more or less in the same way that Wu bei zhi does. The order of major
categories is different, and the framework simpler, but, like *Wu bei zhi*, *Dengtan bijiu* uses an organizational framework legible to literati readers. *Dengtan bijiu* achieves this by following the categorization pattern of “Heaven, then Earth, then People (*Tian, di, ren* 天地人). For example, chapters one through five deal with astronomy and astronomical divinatory methods; chapters eight through nine deal with geography; chapter ten discusses matters relevant to each capital district and province. Chapters 11 and 12 move on to matters relevant to generals, in Chapter 11, how they are to wield authority, in Chapter 12, their selection. Chapter 13 deals with the selection of soldiers, then, their training. Chapters 21 through 24 discuss the particulars of non-Han neighboring states and peoples. Like *Wu bei zhi*, the beginning of each section devoted to a topic named in the table of contents contains an “editorial discussion” (*ji* [X topic] *shuo* 輯 X 説) of the topic at hand and Wang Minghe’s editorial choices.

What differs, then, between Mao’s work and Wang’s? Wang identified as a military examination graduate and commander. His explanatory notes explicitly state that he does not seek to compete with literati officials in their mastery of history.\(^\text{456}\) *Dengtan bijiu* does not address historical events in the same comprehensive way that *Wu bei zhi* does. However, it does include memorials, which *Wu bei zhi* does not. Wang Minghe’s stated goal is to write down what he has come across in his own reading, not to be comprehensive. He does not include things that can be found elsewhere. The result is topically comprehensive in the same sense as *Wu bei zhi*, but contains a far smaller quantity of information. Rhetorically, both *Dengtan bijiu* and *Wu bei zhi* insist on the importance of utility of the information they present. The primary difference between the two is the compilers’ discussion of their own positionality. Where Wang writes, “Military men’s knowledge is short and shallow. I dare not measure myself against the famous

men and grand officials of this age in speaking of contemporary affairs, “Mao Yuanyi insists literati’s knowledge of what Wang calls “specialized affairs” (zhuanshi 專事) is lacking. Their audiences might be the same, but their positionality is not.

The late-Ming military books that Mao Yuanyi does not quote are also telling. These are either information that would be repetitive, halfhearted attempts at the same encyclopedic project, or were written too late to have circulated to Mao Yuanyi. Several things distinguish Wu bei zhi and other late-Ming statecraft encyclopedias from earlier military and statecraft manuals: (1) use of the rhetoric of concrete study, evidence and practice; and (2) the level of detail in the signposting for readers. There is help for readers to interpret technical information. These books are carefully edited such that tables of contents, titles of chapters and sections, illustrations, and punctuation all give readers direction. The tables of contents are often so detailed that a book can be used as a reference book, much like a modern encyclopedia. The next section will examine structural similarities and common rhetorical practices between statecraft compendia and Wu bei zhi.

5.4 Statecraft Compendia as Libraries: Rhetorical and Structural Praxis

The prefaces of such statecraft compendia and collectanea from the seventeenth century read the same. They start like this. In these times, our state is troubled. Disasters of one kind or another haunt its laboring masses, and therefore, the government. Different kinds of people live within its borders: craftsmen and farmers, soldiers and civilians, merchants and scholars, state officials and unemployed gentry. Into these boxes, we all, the prefaces say, fit more or less snugly, if uncomfortably. Those most affected by crises of food insecurity or military catastrophe

457 Ibid.
are those least empowered to affect change—change is rooted in good governance, which is, in
turn, rooted in a strong state, well supplied with the appropriate technical expertise. This
expertise is collected in historically comprehensive encyclopedic tomes aiming at the exhaustive
enumeration of knowledge and texts on a given subject.

Statecraft compendia and collectanea (collections of separate titles) share rhetorical
practices,\textsuperscript{458} such as those seen here, methods of systematizing information, and were all
deployed socially to claim expertise, status, and power. When authors or compilers assigned
credit for compilation of such texts, they laid claim to expertise that enabled them to negotiate
networks of power within and without the civil bureaucracy that valued expertise.

Compendia on technical subjects had to make an argument for their relevance to
statecraft by emphasizing their reliability. They stressed their choice of reputable textual sources
and their reliance on “concrete” evidence, whether from second hand experience via books or
firsthand experience. Even those that did not show as much explicit concern for their relevance
to state survival, like \textit{Tiangong kaiwu}, shared editorial and rhetorical strategies that stressed the
legitimacy and utility of the information therein. In this, they differed from state-sponsored
compilations like \textit{Chongzhen lishu}. However, all these encyclopedic technical tomes acted as
highly searchable archives of particular kinds of information. To return to the vocabulary of
Chapters 2, 3, and 4, they endeavored to compile and make readily legible a library of
specialized information for a literati audience.

\textsuperscript{458} On rhetoric as a social practice, see Chapter 2.
5.4.1 *Tiangong kaiwu: Encyclopedism and Craftwork*

In *Wu bei zhi*, *Yuelü quanshu*, *Nongzheng quanshu*, and *Huang Ming jingshi wenbian*, the compilers’ own prefaces and the prefaces of later collators and acquaintances all make a point of emphasizing the importance of “concrete studies” or “concrete evidence” to the literati project of governance (*jingshi* 經世 or *jingji* 經濟). However, texts that fit less comfortably within the categories of “statecraft texts” (*Tiangong kaiwu*) share concern with either “concrete” practice and evidence or empirical observation. Song Yingxing’s preface to *Tiangong kaiwu*, while less explicitly concerned with the application of his knowledge to governance, is still concerned that the literate elite empirically observe of the basics of craft work, even if they had no tacit knowledge of it.\(^{459}\) Song begins his preface as follows:

> Heaven covers and earth cradles the things numbering in the tens of thousands, and affairs follow upon them. To complete them all with none left out, how is this [within the bounds] of man’s strength? Things and affairs already number in the ten thousands, one must wait upon oral transmission or witnessing with one’s own eyes; only after this can one recognize them. How many can [one actually witness]? Among the myriad things, those that are useful to people and those are are not each make up about half [the total]. The world has those who are clever and have broad knowledge of things [bowu 博物], and the crowds raise them up. But they do not enjoy the flowers of the fig and pear trees, and instead conjecture about rare plants like the apples of Chu. The casts of cooking pots are alive and regular, but they indulge in talk of managing ritual tripods.”


\(^{460}\) Song Yingxing 宋應星, “Tian gong kai wu xu” 天工開物序 (Preface to *The works of heaven and the inception of things*), in *Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物, in XXSK, v. 1115, 1a–1b. For an alternative translation of this preface, see Sun, and Sun, *Tian’gong Kaiwu: Chinese Technology In the Seventeenth Century*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1966, xiii–xiv.
Song’s concern with empirical observation and the utility of compiled knowledge is evident here, even if the near jingoistic language found in *Wu bei zhi* and statecraft tomes is absent.

Song Yingxing’s book is the only one of the books analyzed below that relies primarily on his own writing, not the quotation of others. In the earliest edition I have seen, there was no punctuation, but much like in *Wu bei zhi*, spacing was used to separate topics. Song still follows the premise that knowledge must be historicized and contextualized within the cosmos as well as observed. His introductions to each section serve this purpose. Dagmar Schäfer has argued that Song “propagated empirical studies,” and that “Discussions of ‘knowledge and action’ (*zhi xing*) in the late Ming intellectual world turned away from text-based approaches and new ways were found to establish facts and explain evidence.” While I agree that Song himself shifted toward practices of knowledge-making rooted in empirical observation and personal experience, the majority of those involved in “concrete studies” or “statecraft” cannot be said to have done the same. Schäfer and Joanna Handlin argue that experience and empiricism came at the expense of textual authority when approaching technical subjects. However, the practices and discourse of compilers of technical collectanea and encyclopedias like those discussed below show that experience and textual authority were actually deeply intertwined.

5.4.2  *Yuelü quanshu: Encyclopedism and Ritual*

Works on music, dance, ritual, and calendrics employ similar rhetoric. Although less obvious to modern eyes, all of these topics were essential to the governance of the state. Nicolas Standaert argues that such works by Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1565–1630) and Zhu Zaiyu 朱載堉

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(1536–1611) were part and parcel of statecraft and concrete studies in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{462} In Zhu Zaiyu’s *Yuelü quanshu*, encyclopedic in scale, we find emphasis on concreteness, and the importance of the study of music, dance, ritual, and calendrics to governance: “Yushu states: ‘Harmonize the seasons, months, and holidays; standardize the weights, and measures…. This is one large branch of kingly governance and the origins of standard tones.’”\textsuperscript{463} Standaert writes that Zhu’s work is the most “complete” surviving work on this particular topic, and that it relies on “factual data” to describe “practical matters,” and historical examples.\textsuperscript{464} Not only does this compilation share such epistemological rhetoric with other encyclopedic texts, but it also shares organizational strategies. These organizational strategies, like *Wu bei zhi*, unveil epistemic assumptions that the history of a kind of knowledge, technique or technology is important to justifying how it is known to be reliable.

Although *Yuelü quanshu* is a collectanea of smaller works, the works within it employ the same organizational principles seen in the construction of *Wu bei zhi*. Works of statecraft attempting to be both comprehensive and systematic generally prioritized either quotations or

\textsuperscript{462} Standaert, “Ritual Dances and Their Visual Representations in the Ming and the Qing,” 68–181.

\textsuperscript{463} Zhu Zaiyu 朱載堉, [Zheng fan, Wanli era, between 1596 and 1620], *Yuelü quanshu* 樂律全書 (Complete Work on Music), 46 juan, in 20 ce, The East Asian Library, Princeton University Library, call no. TA141/278. Title translations follow Nicolas Standaert. Translations of individual passages are my own. Also consulted, Zhu Zaiyu 朱載堉, *Yuelü quanshu* 樂律全書 [Complete Work on Music], Reprint of woodblock print, Zheng fan, Wanli era, between 1596 and 1620, 46 juan, in Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan 北京圖書館古籍珍本叢刊, volume 4 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1987). Reprint of the same edition held by Princeton University, but this copy is a reprint of a copy from Beijing Library. Standaert translates *shi* 實 as “solidity,” see page 107. For this quotation, see “Preface to *Lüxue xin shuo*,” *Lüxue xin shuo* 律學新說 [New theories on the study of tones], in *Yuelü quanshu*, 1a. The original reads: 虞書曰：協時月、正日、同律度量衡。。。此王政之大端、律呂之本原 也。The ellipses contain two other quotations on rites and music from *Yushu* from the Book of Documents.

\textsuperscript{464} Standaert, “Ritual Dances,” 107, 112.
chapters or both in a similar topical structure: classics, history, techniques, technology, and, if relevant the ‘other.’ Both Yuelü quanshu and Chongzhen lishu, the two collectanea discussed here, strive to introduce new methods of calculation for ritual music and calendrics. Where they describe new methods, the historical dimension of their epistemic justifications is placed in prefaces to chapters or works in the collectanea that address new techniques. When the techniques described are not new, but time tested and true, the structure of the chapters mirrors Wu bei zhi almost exactly.

This mirroring effect is most easily demonstrated in one of the longest works included in Yuelü quanshu, Lülü jingyi waipian (Finer points of tonality, outer chapters). Chapters 9 and 10 of this work, each titled “Ancient and Contemporary Miscellaneous Theories of Music With Appendices,” display this most clearly. Chapter 9 contains essays on the importance of correct ritual dance to the state, historicizing the dances that Chapter 10 then describes using first text, then a combination of text and image. Zhu Zaiyu argues that contemporary people are incorrect to only teach ritual dance after Confucian officials come to power. Citing the Liji (Record of Rites), he argues that, rather, like the ancients, ritual dance, poetry and song should be an integral part of the early education of literati. Moreover, recent writings interpret the positioning of dancers incorrectly. Essays follow in Chapters 9 and 10 correcting certain mistakes of contemporary dress and style. Chapter 10 then continues with diagrams of the position of dancers performing “Empty-Handed Dances,” describing the symbolism behind each position. Like in Wu bei zhi where similar content is described,

466 Zhu Zaiyu, Lü lü jingyi waipian, in Yuelü quanshu, in Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan, juan 9, 81a–82a.
467 Ibid., juan 10, 89a–90a.
history precedes a technique, followed by image, then explanatory text. The best examples are in
*Wu bei zhi*, “Teaching Skills,” especially *juan* 36, on swordsmanship. *Yuelü quanshu* does not
employ punctuation in the sense of “markings” to help make its material legible, but like
*Tiangong kaiwu* and *Wu bei zhi*, it does employ spacing, tables of information and images.

### 5.4.3 *Nongzheng quanshu*: Encyclopedism and Agriculture

*Nong zheng quan shu*, although presented to the Chongzhen emperor in 1641 and
reprinted at his command,\(^{468}\) has more in common structurally with *Tiangong kaiwu*, *Yuelü
quanshu* and *Wu bei zhi* than with texts conceived from their beginnings by imperial institutions,
like *Chongzhen lishu*. The explanatory notes (*fanli* 凡例) span 10 pages in *Nongzheng quanshu*.
They are compiled by Chen Zilong 陳子龍 (1608–1647) who identifies himself as the copy
editor of the book. He obtained the manuscript from Xu Guangqi’s grandsons after Xu’s death,
namely, Xu Erjue 徐爾爵. He then compiled those notes on behalf of Xu, and via Zhang Guowei
張國維, asked Fang Yuegong 方岳貢 to have blocks cut for it.\(^{469}\)

Chen takes responsibility for the final selection and organization of sources and topics in
the book, but gives Xu the primary credit. The prefaces and the explanatory notes both explain
both the selection of sources and organization of the book. Although the three prefatory authors,

\(^{468}\) Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?,” 355.

Books Digitization Project. Bray and Métailié argue that *Nongzheng quanshu* was a social creature. Chen was
responsible for deleting much duplicated material and adding missing pieces of this text. The fact that it is
necessary to ask whether or not Xu was primarily responsible for compiling the book supports the idea that such
books would enact the identity of their attributed author. It is Xu who is remembered for *Nongzheng quanshu*,
rather than Chen. See Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?,” especially pages
323, 335–336, and 352.
including Zhang Guowei and Fang Yuegong, acknowledge that Chen and Fang are responsible for the compilation and printing of the book, Xu is given credit for the selection of sources, their organization, and the insight into their importance.

As Chen outlines these choices in the explanatory notes, rather than explicitly stating the titles of each section of the book, Chen implicitly describes each section by naming the sources used therein and why they were chosen. He enumerates them in the order in which the sections fall in the book. Some sections are explicitly named, others are not. However, Chen identifies the names of quoted authors consistently. The epistemological structure of the book and choice of sources mirror that of *Wu bei zhi* and other statecraft encyclopedias.

Like *Wu bei zhi*, *Nongzheng quanshu* begins with the classics. In the table of contents, the first section of the book (Chapters 1–3) is titled “Fundamentals of Agriculture” (*Nongben*農本). In the absence of a widely agreed upon canon of classics in agricultural administration, this means excerpting all material that had anything vaguely to do with agriculture from the Confucian canon and other pre-imperial received traditions. Sources are named in the prefaces and explanatory notes from oldest to newest, focusing first on Confucian classics, and pre-imperial sources, and then on authoritative and well-known texts from the imperial period, listed in chronological order. The titles are usually identified first by the names of their attributed authors, and then by a title or approximate title. Chen goes on to describe the kinds of sources used for each titled section of the text in the order that they appear. For a breakdown of which kinds of sources are used in each section, see Table 5. The prefaces of *Nongzheng quanshu* by Zhang Guowei and Fang Yuegong make similar, albeit shorter, statements regarding the sources and ordering of material. Chen also notes that the printed version of *Nongzheng quanshu* is punctuated. He credits Xu with this punctuation claiming, “Its punctuation has been left as it
was, as when I looked at it, I was afraid it conveyed some deep meaning, and didn’t dare make subjective changes” (其評點俱仍舊，觀恐有深意，不敢臆易也).470 Reading through the prefaces, explanatory notes, and contents of Nongzheng quanshu, one is taken by the similarity of strategies here and those in Wu bei zhi for making legible, selecting, and ordering sources from historical and technical texts.

Aside from enumerating which sources are used, why, and in what order, Chen also praises them for their utility (shiyòng 实用).471 He is not alone in this. The prefaces engage in similar rhetorical moves, and make extensive use of the rhetoric seen in Wu bei zhi regarding “governing the people” (qimin 齊民) and the importance of textual competence in technical realms for literati in positions of power. Zhang Guowei praises Chen Zilong for erudition in the “techniques of state management” (jingshu 經術) and for paying careful attention to “books of statecraft” (jingji zhi shu 經濟之書) in editing Xu’s work. In Nongzheng quanshu, one prefatory author goes a step further and claims to have witnessed Xu Guangqi performing expert knowledge of certain practices important to agricultural governance, in particular, staying up half the night in Chang’an to measure its latitude.472 Chen praises Xu’s study of Western methods of irrigation because, As for learning from the West, even Shu and Mo473 can’t compare to its ingenuity. In the section on irrigation, I’ve recorded what is of some help to farmers. Its text is speedily

470 Chen Zilong, “Fanli,” in Xu Guangqi, Nongzheng quanshu, 10b. The original reads: 其評點俱仍舊，觀恐有深意，不敢臆易也.

471 See Chen Zilong, “Fanli,” in Xu Guangqi, Nongzheng quanshu, pp. 8–10. See also Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the Nongzheng quanshu?,” 358.


473 Gong Shu Pan 公輸般 and Mozi 墨子 from Mozi.
becoming a close second to *Kaogong ji*《考工記》! No wonder one says, when propriety is lost, seek it amongst the barbarians.

泰西之學輸墨遜其巧矣。水法數卷採其有裨於農者，其文則騁騁乎致工之亞哉。豈曰禮失而求諸夷。 

The age and genre of the source determine its placement within the semi-chronological hierarchy of topics, but its possible utility determines whether the source is used at all—all the better if the techniques therein have been observed effective.

### 5.4.4 *Huangming jingshi wenbian: Encyclopedism and Statecraft*

Other statecraft texts, equally encyclopedic in scale and by a similar group of compilers, employed the same rhetorical practices as *Nongzheng quanshu*, but used different organizational methods because they employed different sources. Chen Zilong’s name is most associated with *Huangming jingshi wenbian 皇明經世文編* (Compiled writings on statecraft of the August Ming dynasty), compiled in 1638. *Huangming jingshi wenbian* collected mostly policy memorials. These are gathered by author, and the authors are ordered chronologically according to when they lived. The entire book is printed with both grammatical and emphatic punctuation marks to assist the reader in deciphering these official-style documents. Below, we’ll discuss the social practices and actors involved in creating this text, but for now it will be sufficient to observe that Chen Zilong justifies the collection and collation of Ming-dynasty policy memorials as an exercise in finding models of some concrete use to current officials. Chen gives the following explanation:

The ancients had histories that recorded events; they had histories that recorded things people said. The most essential of these words can be found in text of histories of events.

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Guiding out their ends causing one to know their origins, itemizing and analyzing them causing one to know the depths they plumb. Things aside from writings—none can be so detailed. As for affairs being collected in writings, how much more so do the servants of the emperor produce remonstrative essays, and writings on difficult topics. These grand plans and far-reaching schemes, we submit above to prepare the classics of this era; and below to provide further generations with master models. Were we to not collate them, how could gentlemen consult them? This is the reason Master Xu [Xu Fuyuan 徐孚遠], Master Song [Song Zhengbi 宋徵璧], and I compiled Jingshi bian.

These documents, Chen argues, are important as a concrete resource for future officials to consult. This is crucial because the gentry class’s lack of attention to concrete studies is one of the dangers of failing to distribute such texts:

Because lost texts and [extant] writings have yet to be collected and unified, they are dispersed throughout the world. There are, generally, three dangers that arise from this: One, the court is without good histories; two, the state lacks respectable families [to pass down these traditions]; three, the gentry lacks concrete studies [shixue 實學] …. Literati these days seek splendor and abandon the concrete. They hoard textual fragments, and thus texts on etymology could fill a house. They don’t detest following the voices of others or playing up the color [in their writings], so their carvings and paintings cater to what the ruler of their time values. The most urgent thing of our times is the juncture of true and false, gain and loss. They have not given this careful attention. Those that can seek such books are few, and so it is that the wise in the world decrease daily. That is why I say that [the gentry] lacks concrete studies.

475 Chen Zilong, “Xu” 序 [Preface], in Huangming jingshi wenbian 皇明經世文編 [Compiled statecraft texts of the August Ming], edited by Chen Zilong et al., in SKJH, 1–2.

476 Ibid., 2b–5a.
One of the other compilers, Song Zhengbi, writes, “These [writings of Confucians] are just grandiloquent and without benefit to actual use.”\textsuperscript{477} He argues that previous dynasties have in fact compiled memorials and remonstrance documents from high officials, but the Ming does not yet have such a compilation of its own hidden treasures. Part of the problem, he argues, is that officials only have access to a very narrow selection of an abundance of such texts.

Master Xu Fuyuan, Master Chen Zilong and I, Zhengbi, have taken the collected writings of the great servants of the Ming state and plucked out their essence, reining them into a single book. Like collecting wood in the mountains or diving for pearls in the depths, where there were many, we took many, where there were few we took only a few. When it came to those necessary for statecraft, but that are not recorded in this collection, we collected them on the side to supplement its profundity. In total we created over 500 chapters of text. People have repeatedly praised it as correct. Our intent is to seek the concrete. It is titled “Statecraft.”

Song’s rhetoric repeats the concern with the frivolous concerns of literati, and the importance of the collation of texts to the project of statecraft. The standard for inclusion, whether formally a military official (\textit{wuren} 武人) or literatus (\textit{wenshi} 文士), is the practical applicability (\textit{shiyong} 實用) of the texts produced. The writings of officials with experience fighting a particular kind of rebel or outsider are recorded for consultation on these specific topics.

What topics of study might be included in the category of statecraft? Song identifies the most important problems facing the state, primarily, military uprisings in diverse areas of the empire. He also acknowledges that the poverty of the people is an urgent concern, and then identifies this and military logistics as one amongst the most important topics for the study of

\textsuperscript{477} Song Zhengbi, “Fanli,” in Chen Zilong, ed., \textit{Huangming jingshi wenbian}, 1a.

\textsuperscript{478} \textit{Ibid.}, 1b.
governance: ritual (li 禮), agricultural governance, punishments the application of law, the
management of craftsmen, and knowledge of animal husbandry (and the related weak and strong
points of the “barbarian” others). Song and Chen’s paratextual material appended to
Huangming jingshi wenbian states programmatically the objectives and legitimate methods of
the textual study of the concrete problems (and solutions, technologies, and techniques) of
statecraft.

Other seventeenth-century statecraft books fluently reproduce the language and logic of
statecraft and concrete studies rhetoric, fitting comfortably within this genre defined by Chen,
Song, and Xu Fuyuan. They also reproduced compilation practices found in Wu bei zhi that are
less relevant in a compilation of memorials as described by Chen and Song. Huangming jingshi
wenbian compiles examples of policy and practice advocated by individuals in the imperial
bureaucracy across the Ming dynasty. Aside from organizing the texts by author in chronological
order of the lives of the authors, Huangming jingshi wenbian does not employ the more
complicated organizational principles observed elsewhere. However, it does contain a detailed
table of contents so that a reader might flip directly to the writings of an individual that interests
him or to a time that interests him. The compilers assume the reader knows the period in which
each individual lived.

Still other statecraft texts aim to explicate the techniques and technologies relevant to
certain domains of statecraft. The theory of these techniques and technologies is found in
multiple genres. Because such encyclopedias compile texts from multiple genres, in order to
provide adequate signposting for readers they therefore require an enumeration of principles,
detailed table of contents, and punctuation like those seen in Wu bei zhi and Nongzheng quanshu.

Ibid., 9b–12b.
Between shared rhetorical practices in prefaces, shared practices of information organization and signposting, and punctuation, encyclopedic compendia of statecraft and concrete studies have far more in common with one another than with books in their traditional bibliographical categories, like “military books” or “agricultural books.”

### 5.5 The Social Lives of Statecraft and Concrete Studies Compendia

The rhetoric of the genre of statecraft, concrete studies and the importance of encyclopedism to that project is clearly reproduced across these compilations. Like *Wu bei zhi*, these books preserve material records of the social practices that produced them and identities for their compilers. For statecraft and concrete studies texts of the late Ming, this often coincided with the reproduction and reinforcement of partisan, loyalist networks and reflected bureaucratic disagreements. Although, as we saw in Chapter 2, neither *Wu bei zhi* nor Mao Yuanyi’s personal writings shed much light on the social practices involved in the compilation of the materials in *Wu bei zhi*, Mao’s personal writings do speak to how social practices enact the epistemological object *Wu bei zhi* and Mao’s own social identity. *Yuelü quanshu, Chongzhen lishu* and *Tiangong kaiwu* offer still other windows into how statecraft texts were socially produced and deployed. Similarities exist between the social practices surrounding these books and *Wu bei zhi*, but differed significantly depending on the social position of the compilers. Our glimpses into the social lives of these books depends heavily on the surviving archive.

Just as the paratexts of *Huangming jingshi wenbian* are the clearest seventeenth-century statement of what constituted statecraft and its epistemological concerns, they also offer one of the clearest pictures of the function of literati networks in the production and reception of such a text. In fact, Song Zhengbi devotes approximately 8 pages of the explanatory notes (*fanli*) to
assigning credit to those who assisted the responsible trio (Chen Zilong, Xu Fuyuan, and Song) in finding pertinent materials. In *Nongzheng quanshu*, Chen Zilong similarly devotes considerable space to enumerating the work of hands other than Xu Guangqi’s and his own in the posthumous editing and compilation of *Nongzheng quanshu*, and the principles followed in its collation and proof reading. However, the initial work of the collection of materials for *Nongzheng quanshu* was entirely that of Xu Guangqi, and the compilers of *Nongzheng quanshu* went to great lengths to associate the practical, useful, study of concrete practices of agricultural administration with him. *Wu bei zhi* likewise does not present itself as a communal project, but rather the work of one man.

Of the statecraft encyclopedias and collectanea analyzed here, *Chongzhen lishu* and *Tiangong kaiwu* already have extensive analyses of the surviving sources detailing their social production and deployment. Chu Ping-yi writes of *Chongzhen lishu*,

...the compilation process of the *Calendrical Treatises of the Chongzhen Reign* and its variants bear the mark of struggle among interested social groups which attempted to stabilize the meaning of a body of knowledge by bestowing on it a corporeal format, thereby inscribing meaning on the materiality of these books….this archive also served as an interface through which various social groups interacted with each other.\(^{480}\)

*Chongzhen lishu*, by virtue of its status as an imperially commissioned collectanea, embodies a different constellation of relationships from a privately compiled book. No matter the origins of a book project, however, Chu Pingyi’s argument describing them as “archives” upon which groups impose meaning remains valid. For *Chongzhen lishu*, Chu Pingyi argues that the materialization of different versions of this text in the Ming and Qing dynasties was the method by which different groups of bureaucrats inscribed their own history on technologies of calendrics. The preponderance of texts inspired by Western astronomy via the Jesuits created space for Jesuits to

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claim superiority for “Christian” calendrics, and the dearth of “indigenous” texts before the Siku quanshu project in the Qianlong period became a battleground for power within the Astronomical Bureau.\textsuperscript{481}

Other collectanea and encyclopedias also act as archives of particular social networks, conflict, and historical narratives of technology and techniques. Huangming jingshi wenbian is perhaps a more obvious example of a book acting as archive to a modern eye. Rather than creating new material and combining that material in different formats, as Chu describes, the compilers of Huangming jingshi wenbian consciously collected texts worth preserving and systematically organized them. The explanatory notes and prefaces to this collection name the primary brains behind the collection work: Chen Zilong, Song Zhengbi, and Xu Fuyuan, all from the Songjiang 松江 area. However, an additional paratext, “Names of renowned evaluators” (jianding minggong xingshi 鑒定名公姓氏), lists 186 additional men involved in the project. Xie Yu shows that prefaces and paratexts by these men center the book as a collaborative effort centered in a particular locale, but reaching out to men across the Ming empire, especially members of the Restoration Society (Fushe 复社). The text materializes the relationships between compilers, editors, printers, etc., but also materializes cross-empire networks of communication.\textsuperscript{482} Xie also shows how poetry exchanges and participation in learned political societies like the Restoration Society maintained the networks that put together these collaborative works. Much of the same local network was mobilized by Chen Zilong to produce Nongzheng quanshu after the death of Xu Guangqi, namely, Fang Yuegong, Zhang Guowei, and

\textsuperscript{481} Ibid., 177–178.

\textsuperscript{482} For an excellent analysis of the building and deploying of social capital via this project, see Xie Yu, “Wan Ming Jiangnan shiren qunti yanjiu,” 28–37, 39, 46–51, 53–56.
Xu Fuyuan. *Nongzheng quanshu* can be read as the post-mortem creation of an archive serving the political purposes of the network Xu Guangqi left behind. While Chen Zilong was younger than Mao Yuanyi by 14 years, their networks and strategies for maintaining them overlapped considerably. Both men exchanged literary work, whether poetry, prefaces, or letters, with Chen Jiru, Qian Qianyi, and Xu Guangqi, and interacted extensively with self-identified Donglin partisans or Restoration Society members.483

Works like *Wu bei zhi* and *Tiangong kaiwu* present an altogether different sort of problem. Instead of presenting themselves as communal achievements, they are presented as the work of a single compiler or author, even as prefaces or other paratexts are “used to tighten political bonds and forge ideological links…. [and] construct, define, and maintain relationships.”484 Dagmar Schäfer writes this when looking at the networks that *Tiangong kaiwu* embodied and reinforced. This task is considerably more difficult for this text than *Wu bei zhi*, for Song Yingxing did not leave behind nearly as many personal writings as Mao Yuanyi. There is no trove of publicly preserved letters to mine. Schäfer manages to piece together some of the reception history of *Tiangong kaiwu* by looking to the collected works of Tu Shaokui and Chen Hongxu, both literary patrons of Song Yingxing. Tu Shaokui was a financial patron, and Chen an intellectual friend. Neither recorded what they thought of *Tiangong kaiwu* in bibliographies of their book collections or otherwise. Schäfer concludes that both Tu and Chen were interested in “technical topics,” and both had supported other work by Song, therefore, from their silence, “we must conclude that Song’s generation carefully ignored the work.”485 Song Yingxing,

483 On Chen Zilong’s involvement with partisan politics, see Xie Yu. See also Chang, *The Late-Ming Poet Ch’en Tzu-lung*, 6, 16–17, 113, 119.

484 Schäfer, *The Crafting of the Ten Thousand Things*, 244.

485 Ibid., 244–249. Quotations from 249.
Schäfer argues, was an outsider in many ways, one who had given up on participating in the imperial bureaucracy beyond the status of a local teacher. Unlike the others interested in concrete studies and statecraft observed here, Song Yingxing was not a Ming loyalist, but rather held “a bizarre political opinion.”486 Like Song himself, Tiangong kaiwu itself survives as an intellectual curiosity. The story its archive implies is one of relative isolation.

Zhu Zaiyu’s Yuelü quanshu provides a better picture of the afterlife of a book. Woo Shingkwan gives a succinct analysis of its publication history, namely that each of its component parts was written across a period of decades, then finally compiled and submitted to the Wanli emperor in 1606.487 However, the archive of documents from Zhu Zaiyu’s perspective are limited. His oeuvre is decidedly technical in nature. Aside from surviving memorials discussing his relationship with his father, little survives from Zhu Zaiyu or others about the social process of producing or circulating the book. Instead, we learn that Yuelü quanshu was the product of Zhu’s interest in his imprisoned father’s own work with music, and was submitted to the emperor in the same year that Zhu Zaiyu was finally able to abdicate his position as the Prince of Zheng, though he remained titled and received a reduced but plentiful stipend.488 As a member of the extended royal family, the social networks within which he moved were considerably different from others writing on technical subjects. The question of earning a living by writing a marketable book (à la Chen Jiru) or writing his way into the civil bureaucracy was not pressing, though Zhu Zaiyu did advocate that members of the royal family be permitted to participate in the civil examinations.489 Rather, Yuelü quanshu appears to follow the organizational principles

486 Ibid., 251–252, 258.
488 Ibid., 10–11.
of other technical, encyclopedic collectanea of the late-Ming, but our access to what contemporary social interactions it embodies as an archive is limited.

Encyclopedic compendia were not the only format of statecraft text produced in the Ming. In particular, studies of gazetteers and administrative handbooks have shown that aside from their format and purpose, these texts were deployed to quite different social purposes. Joseph Dennis argues, for example, that gazetteer projects were one means by which gentry families maintained their preeminent status in local society, and newly appointed local officials would use such gazetteers as a resource to learn about their new locale.490 Likewise, administrative handbooks helped officials navigate legal procedures for which the civil examinations would not necessarily have prepared them, for example, local magistrates, prefects, or prefectural judges whose duties shifted and expanded over time, and required detailed familiarity with both the Ming code of law and case law.491 What distinguishes statecraft compendia like Wu bei zhi, Nongzheng quanshu, Yuelü quanshu, and others, from handbooks and gazetteers alike is (1) their focus on technical information; (2) their organizational structure and aim to comprehensively represent available information on a topic, whether historical or new; and (3) their compiler’s social purposes, which usually targeted technical knowledge relevant to the planning and execution of empire-wide policy instead of the procedures needed by officials at the county or prefectural level. Statecraft encyclopedias and collectanea were compiled and

490 Dennis, Writing, Publishing, and Reading, 64–66.
circulated in pursuit a variety of social and political and social goals, but whatever their goals, they all relied on the demonstration of comprehensive expertise in technical subjects, and the ability to organize that information for an elite bureaucratic audience.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter began as an effort to explain what exactly *Wu bei zhi* has in common with other statecraft encyclopedias and collectanea, especially those that were privately compiled. What practices contributed to the shaping of this particular kind of technical library of information in the late Ming? *Wu bei zhi* represents a shift in the style of knowledge presentation that emphasized not just the utility of the information, but the utility of the book as a material presentation of social or cultural resources. Even though military books postdating *Wu bei zhi* attack *Wu bei zhi* for its lack of utility, such texts still agreed that encyclopedism served a need for comprehensively collecting technical knowledge and making it readable for a specific audience. Bray and Métalié argue that *Nongzheng quanshu* belongs to a category of “statecraft writing” that “functions predominantly as a kind of political instrument in which the role of agriculture is as much symbolic as material, an idealization of the well-run state.” This might be fundamentally true of statecraft compendia in this period, but we ought to be careful about whose political instrument they were. The books discussed here were primarily social instruments of the compilers and networks that read and shaped them, as we saw for *Wu bei zhi* in Chapter 3. However they could also serve as instruments of the state, especially if the compiler envisioned them, like Mao Yuanyi, as part of his service to the state. The practices of

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492 See also page 18–19 of the introduction to this dissertation. Bray and Métalié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?” 324, quoting Brook, “Xu Guangqi in His Context,” 72–98.

493 Bray and Métalié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?” 324.
encyclopedism in this period fed into a rhetoric of utility, comprehensive information collection, and reformatory patriotism that served the social needs of compilers. In the late Ming, texts were material expressions of new information organizational practices catering to an elite who believed in the co-construction of textual and practical expertise and material expression of those networks of literate power.

*Wu bei zhi* is not unique in that it materializes the rhetoric, information organization practices, and social practices of compilation and exchange discussed here. It is unique in that it materializes all of them. Its inclusion of punctuation attempts to shape a coherent reading experience that few other texts do. This is one reason why *Wu bei zhi* has been a touchstone in scholarship on the history of statecraft and the history of science and technology. Another is that we continue to hope that *Wu bei zhi* belongs to a tradition that will allow us to construct a narrative of proto-empiricism and scientific interest in seventeenth-century China. In doing so we lose sight of the textual practices that were not dismissed, but rather, equally integral to expertise in this period. “Concrete” studies texts were “concrete” because they recorded physical techniques, technologies and systems, and prioritized first-hand experience and observation as markers of expertise. But they did so relying on textual testimony as evidence.

Where Chapter 5 has explored encyclopedic statecraft compendia as an emerging genre in the late-Ming, Chapter 6 will explore the reception of *Wu bei zhi* across the late Ming and throughout the Qing dynasty and Republican periods. Chapter 6 will argue that *Wu bei zhi* enjoyed popularity despite being banned in the Qianlong period because it allowed later readers to impose a narrative of indigenous interest in technical statecraft before the fall of the Ming. In fact, while *Wu bei zhi* was not unknown in the late Ming, it might appear larger than life to our eyes because of its scale and reception history. There is insufficient space in Chapter 6 to
compare the reception history of *Wu bei zhi* with that of the statecraft compendia explored in Chapter 5, however, these texts might also loom large in the eyes of modern scholars. For example, library catalogues, works on poetry and music, and reading notes (*dushu ji* 読書記) from the Ming and Qing dynasties and the Republican period list or discuss *Yuelü quan shu*. *Yuelü quanshu* was invoked frequently throughout the late Ming and Qing in arguments over reforms to music, ceremonial dance, and weights and measures.\footnote{Standaert, “Ritual Dances,” 106–156.} Not only was this text, like *Wu bei zhi*, often cited, the number of extant Ming-dynasty editions of *Yuelü quanshu* in North America alone is one clue that it was, and still is, treasured as a material artifact.\footnote{Woo Shingkwan notes that one of the copies in the Princeton Gest Collection is printed on high quality paper, the other, although from the same period, is not. Woo argues that all extant xylographic copies of *Yuelü quanshu* were made with Zhu Zaiyu’s originally commissioned woodblocks. Woo, “The Ceremonial Music of Zhu Zaiyu,” 36.} As an oft-cited touchstone, *Yuelü quanshu* could be, like *Wu bei zhi*, quite useful for understanding meanings imposed on an archive at a time much later than its original composition. For *Wu bei zhi*, Chapter 6 attempts to unmask such meanings.
Table 4. Military titles critiqued by Zhang Zilie in *Gu fanglüe* by Yu Maoheng

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title, author, date</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Category in Xie Wenchao</th>
<th>Quoted in <em>Wu bei zhi</em>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wu bian</em>&lt;br&gt;Tang Shunzhi (16th c.)</td>
<td>Compiled quotations sorted by topic.</td>
<td>Category book</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Yuzi shisan zhong mishu bing heng</em>&lt;br&gt;Yu Longde (17th c.)</td>
<td>A compilation of ‘secretly’ transmitted texts.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jiang jian lunduan</em>&lt;br&gt;Zai Shaowang (Song dynasty)</td>
<td>Evaluation of generals in chronological order</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bingji leizuan</em>&lt;br&gt;Zhang Longyi</td>
<td>Compilation of historical anecdotes demonstrating strategems.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bing ji yao jue</em>&lt;br&gt;Xu Guangqi (17th c.)</td>
<td>A compilation of mnemonic devices.</td>
<td>Drilling manual</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wu bei zhi</em>&lt;br&gt;Mao Yuanyi (1621)</td>
<td>Compiled quotations sorted by topic.</td>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wu Hou quanshu</em>&lt;br&gt;Wang Shiqi (1637)</td>
<td>Collected writings of Zhuge Liang</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Individual parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section title</td>
<td>Chapters included</td>
<td>Sources/Authors named (from the explanatory notes.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundamentals of Farming</strong></td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>Pre Qin: The Six Classics (六經); the Hundred Masters (諸子百家, e.g. Guanzi 《管子》, Zhuangzi 《莊子》); Wei dynasty: Gu Xie 郭類, Ji min yao shu 《齊民要術》; Song and Yuan dynasties: Meng Qi 孟祺; Miao Haoqian 苗好謙; Chang Shiwen 楊師文; Wang Zhen 王禎; Ming dynasty: Yu Zhenmu 俞貞木; Huang Shengzeng 黃省曾, Feng Yingjing 馮應京; Li Shizhen 李時珍; Feng Mugang 馮木岡; Specifically excluded: Ming-dynasty Jishi benmo 紀事本末</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field systems</strong></td>
<td>4–5</td>
<td>Xu Guangqi 徐光啟, Jingtian Kao 《井田考》(Study of the well-field system). Chapter 5, “Tian zhi pian” 田制篇, consults sources already listed above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural affairs</strong></td>
<td>6–11</td>
<td>Collected essays of officials, including Xu Guangqi and others; For prognostication, Guanzi (again).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irrigation</strong></td>
<td>12–20</td>
<td>Yuan dynasty: Yu Ji《虞集》(Record of Yu) Xu Rudong 徐孺東, Lu shui ke tan 《潞水客談》(Discussions of the River Lu) Zhang Guowei 張國維, San Wu shui quanshu 《三吳水利全書》 (Complete book on irrigation of the Wu’s) Xu Guangqi 徐光啟, (personal) notes regarding Western irrigation methods Wang Zhen 王禎 (again)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural implements</strong></td>
<td>21–24</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts of Orchards</strong></td>
<td>25–30</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silkworms and Mulberry Trees</strong></td>
<td>31–36</td>
<td>Xu Guangqi 徐光啟, Nongyi zashu 《農遺雜疏》(Miscellaneous notes on lost agricultural [texts]) Rituals of Zhou《周禮》, “Taizai”「太宰」</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planting</strong></td>
<td>37–40</td>
<td>Rituals of Zhou《周禮》, “Taizai”「太宰」</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animal Husbandry</strong></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Classic of Poetry《詩》, “Lusong”「魯頌」 Rituals of Zhou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section title</td>
<td>Chapters included</td>
<td>Sources/Authors named (from the explanatory notes.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Making 制造          | 42                | Jia Sixie 賈思勰, *Jimin yaoshu*《齊民要術》(Essential techniques for the common people)*496*  
                     |                   | Cui Hao 崔浩, *Shijing*《食經》(Classic of Foods)*497*                                                        |
| Famine Governance 荒政 | 43–60             | *Rituals of Zhou*《周禮》                                                                                         |
|                     |                   | Feudal Lord Xian of Zhou 周藩憲王 (Zhu Youdun 朱有燉), *Jiu huang bencao*《救荒本草》                                   |

*496* Translation from Bray and Métailié, “Who was the author of the *Nongzheng quanshu*?”, 328.

*497* Li Yanshou 李延壽, *Bei shi* 北史 (History of the Northern Wei), juan 21, 790.
Chapter 6: The Book Multiple, *Wu bei zhi* from 1621 to 1911

6.1 Introduction

How grand does a book need to be for scholarly memory of it to become grandiose? Look into scholarship focusing on *Wu bei zhi*, or even scholarship that uses it as a touchstone for military technology in the seventeenth century, and one finds hagiographies of both author and title, occasional dissections of the many material objects that are titled “*Wu bei zhi*,” discussions of Mao Yuanyi’s “military thought,” arguments for its critical place in the development of military technology in pre-modern China, and narratives of its importance to the study of other late-Ming phenomena. However, very little work has been done to examine *Wu bei zhi* as an artifact unto itself, either the material book or the text. Chinese scholarship on *Wu bei zhi* is primarily focused on the study of editions (*banben xue* 版本學). These scholars perform an enormous service differentiating between the individual books left behind that bear the title *Wu bei zhi*. However, recall from the introduction that a book bearing this title contains a text that, while largely the same across material objects, is a malleable, abstract object itself, or an epistemic object. The title-as-epistemic-object, *Wu bei zhi*, refers to a text. Its tense relationship to these material objects that are also *Wu bei zhi* remains unexamined in Chinese literature. When *Wu bei zhi* is invoked, both the material book(s) and the intangible title and text are brought to mind, and both these objects change across time and space. This chapter examines instantiations of both the material and the immaterial object, *Wu bei zhi*, as it manifests in the world, and argues that both the material and epistemic object, *Wu bei zhi*, are intimately related to the contemporaries’ perceptions of their government’s competence and their own ethnic and political identity. The object *Wu bei zhi* is multiple across time and space, but coheres in
singularity under its title, and because of readers’ understandings of what makes a book a coherent thing—often a common title and common text. Grappling with simultaneous multiplicity and singularity gives insight into how practices for interacting with the object changed with time, circumstance, and even ideology.

6.2 **Modern Scholarship: Wu bei zhi as a Means to an End**

The hagiographies we see in scholarship inevitably exclaim over the sheer size of *Wu bei zhi*, its representativeness of Ming military thought, and its relevance to the development of modern technology. The first narrative conflates its bulk with its import; the second neglects its format and relationship to other books with similar modes of production; the last is teleological in nature, and usually presumes a notion of continuous progress toward a future ideal. Occasionally all of these narratives are incorporated into an argument with overtones of nationalism, or personal heroism, as we see in Xu Baolin’s 1988 comment below:

Facing the rise of the political authority of Later Jin, the call to war sounding again and again, the corruption of politics in the Ming court, and the decline of the nation’s fate, [Mao Yuanyi] incited [himself] to study furiously, investigating the strategies of “governing the state and pacifying all under heaven,” and authoring books to argue his theories, all in order to revitalize the fierce, lofty ideal of Ming military preparedness.

從後金政權崛起，狼煙頻頻，明廷政治腐敗，國運衰落，激起了發奮學習、探討“治國平天下”的方略，著書立說，以振興明朝武備的雄心壯。\(^{498}\)

From Wang Lihua 王麗華, in 2007, we hear,

*Wu bei zhi*, edited by Mao Yuanyi of the Ming dynasty, can be called the greatest military encyclopedia of premodern China.

\(^{498}\) Xu Baolin, “*Wu bei zhi chu tan*,” 166.
These sorts of statements are not wrong, and most scholarship written in Chinese begins this way purely because of contemporary academic style in China. These articles usually turn a critical eye to the production of *Wu bei zhi*, asking what kind of information it contains, and what value it has for historical scholarship on technology, military strategy, bibliography, and even cartography. Historians elsewhere have continued to ask the same basic questions of *Wu bei zhi*’s merit as a tool to study the thought of Mao Yuanyi or the history of military technology.

Joseph Needham in 1994, for example, writes:

> A difficulty about the literature of the late Ming is that a number of books on military subjects, especially those which dealt, like Li Phan’s, with the raising and training of militia, were afterwards banned by the government of the Chhing. This applies, for example, to an important work on military pyrotechnics, the Têng Than Pi Chiu [*Dengtan bijiu*] (Knowledge Necessary for Army Commanders) written by Wang Ming-Hao [Wang Minghe] in the last decade of the 16th century. Most of its content was however incorporated into the third great compendium of Chinese war science, the *Wu Pei Chih* [*Wu bei zhi*] (Treatise on Armament Technology)…. This is the most extensive military encyclopedia in all Chinese history.

Elsewhere, *Wu bei zhi* is considered proof, along with the many other military treatises produced in the late Ming, of “the extent of Ming military activity.” Newer studies address *Wu bei zhi* as a resource for examining late-Ming views on specific technologies, such as military transport.

499 Wang Lihua, “*Wu bei zhi* si zhong Qing ban shu lüe,” 72.
502 Swope, *A Dragon’s Head and Serpent’s Tail*, 17–19.
All of these narratives are useful, but do not address *Wu bei zhi* as an object itself aside from deeming some of its abundant content more important than other content.

I too am guilty of interest in *Wu bei zhi* for the volume of information it contains, but rather than merely noting its enormity, this chapter leans into my own fascination with *Wu bei zhi* the material object. The relevant question to this chapter is not why *Wu bei zhi* was such a long book, but rather why scholars across time have noted this repeatedly, and what import it carries for them. It is not merely the size of *Wu bei zhi* that matters, but its status as a material object, its text constantly revised, and its format materially changed. Fundamental to this chapter is the understanding of *Wu bei zhi*’s instability as both epistemic and material object and the inseparability of author and text.

This chapter demands a diachronic narrative where elsewhere synchronicity has been key. The shape of book and author changed over time materially and immaterially.\(^{504}\) Mao Yuanyi wrote *Wu bei zhi* as a testimonial to his own expertise and love for the Ming state. In Chapter 2, we saw *Wu bei zhi* built through citation practices into a representative library of information for late-Ming military affairs. In Chapter 3 we saw that *Wu bei zhi* became inextricably identified with Mao Yuanyi’s late-Ming social self—one simultaneously multiple, but coherent. In studying the afterlife of *Wu bei zhi*, we find that these things are still true, though the emphasis on which of these things best describes *Wu bei zhi* depends very much on the political, intellectual, and social context of its readers. *Wu bei zhi* across time is best conceived of as a “dividual object,” in Clunas’s terms, or a “multiple object,” in Mol’s. As its

\(^{504}\) In the introduction we considered how the author’s name helps *Wu bei zhi* to cohere, thinking back to Foucault’s “author function.” In this chapter, we’ll see the title, “*Wu bei zhi,*” perform similar work. Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 284–285.
compiler built *Wu bei zhi* and himself through his intellectual practices, so, too, have its readers shaped *Wu bei zhi* as a material and epistemic object across the next 375 years.

The first section of this chapter describes current knowledge of existing editions of *Wu bei zhi*; then summarizes pre-Republican-era copies of *Wu bei zhi* that I have studied; and finally explains basic characteristics of Chinese woodblock-printed books that help distinguish between editions of *Wu bei zhi*. The chapter then analyzes moments when *Wu bei zhi* was reprinted or banned. This section is divided into subsections analyzing *Wu bei zhi* across six periods and spaces: the late Ming and early Qing; a transitional moment in the early eighteenth-century; early modern Japan and Europe; the high Qing under the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735–1796); the mid-nineteenth century; and the last two decades of the Qing dynasty (1890–1911). For each reprinting of *Wu bei zhi* in these periods and its censorship under Qianlong, evidence from contemporary reader reactions will be assessed in conjunction with known material changes in surviving copies of *Wu bei zhi*. These sections argue that reader reactions and material changes in *Wu bei zhi* reflect the political climates in which they were printed. The last section of this chapter first combines my own observation of copies of *Wu bei zhi* with those of other scholars and argues that material changes in the book’s format and content reflect revolutionary sentiments in the late Qing. Secondly, it describes readers’ marks and marginalia I have observed in these copies of *Wu bei zhi* and argues that these reading practices show that late-Qing readers no longer read *Wu bei zhi* as a reference work, but rather as a coherent whole to be read from beginning to end, its value more symbolic than technical.
6.3 Material and Epistemic Instability: Author, Readers, and Text

The material instability of *Wu bei zhi* is a fundamental assumption of the study of editions, though the historical and ontological implications of that assumption aren’t generally explored in depth. This chapter attempts to grapple with its material instability beginning with extant copies I was able to find in North America and Taiwan (see Table 6 for a list of copies and their characteristics). The title that we know as *Wu bei zhi* appears in at least nine separate editions, six of which are commonly known among those studying *Wu bei zhi*. Qiao Na provides the most succinct list of these six editions, which I have roughly translated below. Each original item is included after its English translation.

- The [original] woodblock print edition, carved and printed in the Ming dynasty, Tianqi-era (1621–1627). 明刻印本（明天啟刻本）
- Woodblock print edition, original blocks from the Ming edition, carved in the late Ming, changes to the blocks made in the early Qing, printed in the early Qing. Known as “Edition printed by Lianxi Cottage.” 明刻清修版後重印本（蓮溪草堂印本）
- Early-Qing woodblock print edition, an edition with new blocks carved based on a Ming imprint. 清初刻本（清代據明本覆刻本）
- Japanese woodblock print from year 4 of the Kanbun era (1664), new blocks carved based on the Ming blocks, with some characters carved incorrectly. 日本寬文四年刊本（據明本翻刻，個別文字刻錯）

505 Resources limited my ability to examine copies in Europe and Japan. Examination of copies in China would be redundant given the excellent research by scholars there, much cited in other chapters and immediately below.
• Qing-dynasty, Daoguang-era (1813–1820), wood moveable type edition, (two imprints).\textsuperscript{506}

• Late-Qing Hunan woodblock edition, (blocks newly carved based on the Japanese Kanbun year 4 edition, carved and printed poorly). 清末湖南刻本（以日本寛文四年刻本為底本復刻，刻印不精）\textsuperscript{507}

In her master’s thesis Qiao Na further identifies three editions worth studying, and compares idiosyncrasies between copies. She identifies a manuscript copy attributed to Mao Yuanyi’s nephew, Mao Shangwang 茅尚望, and held at the Center for Martial Arts Research at the National General Administration of Sport of China (Guojia tiyu zongju wushu yanjiuyuan 國家體育總局武術研究院); another Late-Qing Hunan woodblock edition, different from the one listed above; and finally a woodblock-print edition printed in Guangdong, with an advertisement

\textsuperscript{506} Endymion Wilkinson provides a useful basic definition of an edition. He writes, “An edition is normally defined as the total number of books printed from one set of type. Within an edition, all copies printed at any one time are called an impression. A number of impressions from the same setting of type may be produced over a period of many years, but they are all part of the same edition, because the type itself is identical in each of these impressions. The concept also applies to China, even if it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish one set of type….Woodblock editions were distinguished by how, in what form, when, where, or by whom (or what institution) they were printed.” Wilkinson, \textit{Chinese History: A New Manual}, 912–913. Wilkinson provides translations of common terms for describing pre-modern Chinese books on pages 913–916. Joseph Dennis identifies ways in which this definition doesn’t quite accommodate the complicated use of woodblocks to reprint gazetteers, but his qualifications are useful to think of for \textit{Wu bei zhi} too. With gazetteers, extra space was often deliberately left in an edition for later additions. See Dennis, \textit{Writing, Reading, and Publishing}, 122–123.

Woodblocks could be reused at any time, so a copy that appears to be dated to 1621, could have been printed much later, provided the original blocks survived. Woodblocks could be supplemented with new blocks. The original blocks could be censored by carving out individual characters. They could be traced for the purpose of carving new blocks. Movable type editions, like the \textit{Wu bei zhi} Daoguang editions, might be separate imprints of the same set of type, but evidence is insufficient to say for certain.

\textsuperscript{507} Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi \textit{Wu bei zhi} tanxi,” 19.
dating to 1901. Most authors agree to follow three “systems” of transmission described by Ming Sun Poon 潘銘燊 at the Library of Congress, wherein each system is a series of editions based on an original set of blocks or typeset edition: (A) the system based on the 1621 original blocks; (B) the system based on the Japanese blocks (which includes the first late-Qing, Hunan edition); and (C) the Qing-dynasty, Daoguang-era moveable type edition. Most important for our purposes in this chapter, Qiao Na also identifies copies of late-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi* that are not specifically from Hunan or Guangdong, one of which, at Nankai University (*Nankai daxue* 南開大學), appears to be carved after the Daoguang period. The others, at Peking University, Minzu University of China (*Zhongyang minzu daxue* 中央民族大學), and the library of the Academy of Military Sciences PLA China (*Junke yuan* 軍科院), are made up of blocks combined from various existing editions, rendering dating difficult beyond “late-Qing.” Qiao Na’s assessment of these editions exceeds others in detail and was used as a standard to study copies of *Wu bei zhi* in North America and Taiwan for this chapter.

With the exception of the manuscript copy noted above, multiple copies of each of these editions exist across the globe, concentrated in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the United States, and Canada. Previous chapters have relied on reprints of the 1621 edition in modern

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510 Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi tanxi,*” 23.
511 Qiao assesses rare copies of *Wu bei zhi* held in libraries in Mainland China, but did not have access to Taiwan or North America for her comparisons. I attempt to fill in some of these blanks.
collectanea. This chapter refers to copies of the 1621, Japanese 1664, Daoguang-era, and late-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi* in rare book collections in the US, Canada, and Taiwan to question the variations in the material shape of *Wu bei zhi* and their relationship to changes in the instability of the epistemic object, *Wu bei zhi*. I have examined 11 pre-1900 copies of *Wu bei zhi* and recorded any marginalia therein, including two copies of the original 1621 edition, one Japanese copy from 1664, and eight copies that were either Daoguang-era editions or late-Qing editions. Eight copies were held by North American libraries and three by Taiwanese libraries (see Table 6).\(^5\) The two copies of the original 1621 edition of *Wu bei zhi*, held by Princeton University East Asian Library’s Gest Collection and the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Institute of History and Philology at Academia Sinica, contain no marginalia. In order to access late-Ming and early-Qing reader reactions to these material objects, we are limited to what remains of readers’ published writings on this edition, which will be examined below. Five of the copies I examined contain handwritten punctuation, marginalia, or both, and can all be dated reliably to the Daoguang period or later.

Distinguishing between editions of *Wu bei zhi* depends on a number of identifying characteristics that make more sense if one understands the basic form of a Chinese woodblock

\(^5\) Due to lack of resources, two North American copies of *Wu bei zhi* have been left unexamined, one at University of Chicago, and the other at University of California Berkeley. See the National Central Library (Guojia tushuguan 國家圖書館), *Zhongwen guji lianhe mulu* 中文古籍聯合目錄 (Union catalog of Chinese rare books), accessed 20 December 2018, [http://rbook2.ncl.edu.tw/Search/Index/2](http://rbook2.ncl.edu.tw/Search/Index/2). I have not included Harvard Yen-Ching Library’s copy of *Wu bei zhi* in this table. Although I did examine it, my notes are insufficient to warrant inclusion. Harvard reliably identifies it as a Daoguang copy. See Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Wu bei zhi* 武備志, [China: s.n., Qing Daoguang, between 1821 and 1850], as catalogued in HOLLIS, accessed April 3, 2019, [http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990086250170203941/catalog](http://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990086250170203941/catalog).
and its imprints, specifically, those in string-bound format (xian zhuang 線裝). In string-bound format, the blocks themselves contain the content for both the recto and verso sides of a page in each book, divided by the column that forms the “heart” of the block (banxin 板心), and which usually has the book title, chapter number, and page number written vertically down its length. It might also contain a “fishtail” (yuwei 魚尾) pattern (see Figure 8). All content is carved in relief, mirror image to the intended print. Ink is then painted onto the block, and an imprint is then made on paper. The paper is folding vertically along the “heart” of the block, the sheets gathered together along their open edges, which are then sewn with thread into a spine. Blocks generally have a border surrounding the text, which might be either a single line, double, or a mixture of both. Sometimes, columns of characters are divided by vertical lines (column borders). New editions might be made from old blocks that are reused after certain taboo or prohibited characters are carved away, leaving a white, blank space on the paper. New editions could also be made by tracing the content of an old block on new paper, which was then used to carve new blocks. Editions can be distinguished from each other by inferring differences in the blocks used to print them from the marks left on the paper. For example, the style of the block borders, the style of the characters, and the style of the heart of the block, might differ, even within a particular edition. Characters not taboo in 1621 might be part of an emperor’s given name in 1850 and require revision, and statements critical of the Manchus might have been

513 For this translation of xian zhuang, see Lucille Chia, “Publishing and Printing in China.” Chia also includes translations of other binding formats. Note that moveable type editions like those for Wu bei zhi mimic this format.

514 A diagram of a typical woodblock printed page and its associated vocabulary can be found in Tsien Tsuen-Hsuiin, Science and Civilisation in China, Volume 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part I, Paper and Printing, 223.
celebrated in the late Ming, but not tolerated after the Qing took over, and therefore revised, or
carved out, leaving black boxes, or white boxes outlined in black, or blank space. Entire prefaces
and chapters, too sensitive to edit selectively, could be left out of a new edition (eg. The first 11
pages of *juan* 228 of *Wu bei zhi*). *Wu bei zhi*’s editions differ in many of these ways, but their
identification is complicated by Qiao Na’s hypothesis that some of the late-Qing editions, in
particular, were made from a mixture of blocks from various editions, some carved later than
others. The details of the differences between editions will be discussed in tandem with evidence
of readers’ reception of *Wu bei zhi* in the period in which they were printed.

6.4  *Wu bei zhi* Across Time and Space: 1621–1911

6.4.1  *Wu bei zhi* in the late Ming and Early Qing

The first edition of *Wu bei zhi* from 1621 serves as a baseline for comparison, allowing us
to determine what has been removed or added from later editions. Complete copies of this
edition begin with seven prefaces, one of which is Mao Yuanyi’s own, which are followed by the
*fanli* (explanatory notes), the complete table of contents (*zongmu* 總目), the table of chapter titles
(*juanmu* 卷目). These last three items appear in various orders. The blocks for the prefaces are
surrounded by borders of single lines and contain six columns of characters with 13 characters
per column. The heart of the block contains the title of the book, the chapter (*juan*) number, and
page number, and no fishtail. The pages of the table of contents and table of chapter titles are the
same but for the size of the font: they contain nine columns of characters each with 19 characters
per column. This is then followed by the “main text” (*zhengwen* 正文) of the book, the format of
its blocks the same as those for the tables of contents and chapter titles. In the block heart on the
first page of the first chapter, the scribe and block carver’s names are carved: Zhang Bi 章弼 and
Gao Liang 高粱 respectively. These characteristics differ slightly throughout each of the editions, even those which used the original blocks in some fashion. These minor differences help to identify when exactly printed editions of *Wu bei zhi* were ubiquitous and accessible, but the most important variations in the material form of *Wu bei zhi* are those items that were deleted (censored) or added to each subsequent edition.

The early-Qing edition (third in Qiao’s list above) and the Lianxi Cottage edition, also from the early Qing, both exhibit minor revisions to the woodblocks that might be expected after a regime change. The latter of these two editions generally only contains Mao Yuanyi’s preface. According to Wang Lihua, the former contains all the prefaces but that of Li Weizhen, which contained more sensitive material than the rest. The other prefaces contain revisions of language that disparages nomadic peoples like the Mongols and Jurchen (Manchus), or implies the continued sovereignty of the Ming dynasty. In Mao Yuanyi’s preface, “the eastern barbarians” (*donghu* 東胡) is changed to “the army” (*bingge* 兵戈). In Lang Wenhuan’s preface (9b), “the rout of the Eastern Army in 1621” (*xinyou dongshi baiji* 辛酉東師敗績) is changed to “the rout of the border army of that time” (*suishi bianshi baiji* 歲時邊師敗績). In Fu Ruzhou’s preface (2a), “the barbarian Yuan dynasty” (*huyuan* 胡元) is changed to “the former Yuan” (*qian Yuan* 前元). In Zhang Shiyi’s preface, “The Jianzhou foreigners overestimated their abilities” (* Jian yi feiru* 建夷匪茹, see 2a) is changed to “the frontier sounded the alarm” (*bianchui gaojing* 邊陲告警, 20a); “ravaged Fushun, and invaded Shenyang” (*lin Fushun, bi Shenyang* 蹂撫順，逼瀋陽, 2a) is changed to “occupied key positions, and took the foodstuffs by force” (*ju yaojin, duo lianghou* 躥要津，奪糧糇, 20a); and “the Manchu slaves” (*Man nu* 滿奴) is changed to “the
Manchu enemy” (Man di 滿敵, 7a/25a). The publishers made clear efforts to discard parts of the prefaces and the main text that explicitly addressed the Manchus as the enemy, or degraded them in any way. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, the prefaces written by others lauded Wu bei zhi and Mao as part of a steadfast resistance to Manchu incursions. In the early Qing, it is plausible that publishers would have felt the need to take out the most vituperative insults, but would have not felt any need to deny or erase a still-living memory of Ming resistance. Later publishers would not have the luxury of allowing their own generations to resurrect that memory in material form.

The minor changes in Wu bei zhi the material object between the late Ming and early Qing described above preserved a polite version of late-Ming patriotic rhetoric, and were paralleled by readers’ perceptions of Wu bei zhi as an epistemic object, specifically the title’s interdependent relationship with the Mao Yuanyi imagined by readers. From the late Ming to the early Qing, reception of Wu bei zhi as an epistemic object was tied to readers’ perceptions of Mao Yuanyi as late-Ming patriot, military adviser, and intellectual. Both Mao and his book would later come to be examples invoked when readers lamented the damage caused by Qing censorship to “Chinese” knowledge in China after the fall of the Ming to “northern caitiffs”

515 I have never definitively seen a Lianxi Cottage copy or an “early-Qing” copy of Wu bei zhi. These revisions are listed as representative of the early-Qing edition by Wang Lihua, “Wu bei zhi sizhong Qing ban shulüe,” 72. Wang’s work retains a few errors, but remains the most detailed discussion of the characteristics of the early-Qing edition. The changes Wang identifies are all present in Columbia University’s copy of Wu bei zhi. However, other characteristics of Columbia’s copy indicate that it was likely printed at a later date (its main text observes Kangxi-era name taboos). It is possible the blocks for these prefaces were either the early-Qing blocks or reproductions of the same. Most later editions from the Daoguang period (1820–1850) forward exclude all prefaces except for Mao Yuanyi’s. Columbia’s copy is a bit of a conundrum because it contains two copies of Mao Yuanyi’s preface, bound with all the others. The second copy is clearly made from different blocks. It is possible that Columbia’s copy is made of printings of different editions bound together.
(beilu 北虜) or “eastern barbarians” (dongyi 東夷). However, in the late Ming and early Qing, Wu bei zhi was not just a book that protected against these external threats, but the work of a multi-faceted literatus whose interest in the military was equally likely to be mentioned as his poetry and mastery of ancient-style prose (guwen 古文)—sometimes in the space of a single thought. For example, in 1633, 12 years after the first printing of Wu bei zhi, Tan Yuanchun 譚元春 (1586–1637) printed a letter he once wrote to Mao Yuanyi: “After it was returned to me, the preface you wrote, sir, for “Two Mountains in Chu”—I read it daily. And again, the two prefaces you showed me for Wu bei zhi and Xianghun ji, I have daily striven to emulate them. You truly have a knack for ancient prose!”

Mao mentions Tan in another letter to Chen Jiru, in which he is responsible for arranging the carving of blocks for another poetry publication. Tan and Mao clearly maintained correspondence on various titles they helped compile, edit, and print, including both volumes of poetry and Wu bei zhi. To Mao’s contemporaries, Wu bei zhi was inseparable from the poet and master of ancient-prose.

516 Tan Yuanchun, “Yu Mao Zhisheng shu” 與茅止生書 (Writing to Mao Yuanyi), in Tan Youxia heji 譚友夏合集 (Collected writings of Tan Youxia), juan 7, 11a. The original reads: “往辱足下作楚二嶽序，其歸也，日日讀之，又所示武備志、香䰟集二序，日日想服之甚矣。足下能古文也”。This letter is found in Tan’s collected writings, and was likely written around 1620, just before the printing of Wu bei zhi, as a letter to Tan dated to 1620 and addressing the same topics is preserved in Mao’s own collected writings, Shimin sishi ji. “Two Mountains in Chu” likely refers to a poem on the subject by Wang Wei 王微, a courtesan and concubine of Mao Yuanyi. Xianghun ji 香魂集 (Collections of a fragrant soul) is the title of a collection of poetry by a Madam Ma. On Wang Wei, see Liechao shiji 列朝詩集 (Compiled poetry of the ages), in SKJH, ji bu, vol. 95–97, run ji 閏集, juan 4. For Mao Yuanyi’s preface for Xianghun ji 香魂集 (Collections of a fragrant soul), a collection of poetry by a Madame Ma of the Jiang 將 family of Huguan 虎關, see Shimin sishiji, in SKJH juan 16, 3b–4b. For the letter to Tan dated 1620, see Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Tan Youxia shu yi” 與譚友夏書, in SSJ, juan 77, 10b–12b.

517 See Mao Yuanyi, “Yu Chen Mei gong shu yi” 與陳眉公書, in SSJ, juan 77, 1a–2b.
This understanding of both Mao and *Wu bei zhi* persisted in the early Qing, with the patriotic element of both book and compiler’s identities becoming more pervasive in the wake of the Manchu invasion, upheld both by those who chose to remain loyal to the Ming and those who chose to serve the Qing. Perhaps no-one makes this clearer than the one-time Ming official and Qing collaborator Qian Qianyi. In Chapter 3, Qian Qianyi’s biography of Mao was quoted in support of the idea that Mao Yuanyi had built a reputation for himself as a military strategist and expert. Qian Qianyi’s biography heralds Mao’s devotion to the Ming cause, but it also remembers Mao Yuanyi the poet and scholar. Qian Qianyi describes Mao Yuanyi “in his element” when on a military expedition with no cooked food to eat, following Sun Chengzong across the northeastern border, but Qian also makes clear that Mao Yuanyi’s passion for military preparedness was inseparable from his practices as poet and author:

Zhisheng’s talent for poetry was like a swarm of bees. With a swish of his brush he could write 1,000 words as fast as a horse can fly. And that which he preserved in his greatest ambitions was to endeavor to advance his lot. Discussing the restoration of the state, drawing a line in the sand and defending it, sketching strategies with piles of rice, deciding upon plans, and subduing the enemy, gathering article after article, document after document and dispersing them across the rivers and seas, these were all his task. Today, it has already become nothing but drifting smoke blown away on a cold wind. Looking back, I want to winnow [his work] to one or two rhymes and show off their beauty. Was this not how Zhisheng saw himself? And was this not how I knew him?

止生為詩文才氣蜂湧，搖筆數千言倚待立就，而其大志之所存者，則在乎籌進取。論匡複、畫地、聚米、決策、制勝，集中連篇累牘，灑江傾海，皆是物也。今既已化為飛煙，蕩為冷風矣。顧欲刺取一二有韻之言簸揚而藻飾之。是豈止生之所以自命，而亦豈余之所以知止生者哉。518

Qian ends his biography of Mao Yuanyi with Mao’s perception of himself and Qian’s perception of Mao, as patriot and poet—whose poetry and strategy went hand in hand. Qian’s biography of

Mao is not the only place where he mixes poetry, passion, and strategy—the object “Mao” and the object “Wu bei zhi.”

In addition to this biography, Qian Qianyi’s collected writings contain ten poems posthumously honoring Mao Yuanyi—mourning poems (wanci 挽詞), in which events recounted in Mao’s biography are recounted and further reinforced, including his submission of Wu bei zhi to the throne. Qian writes:

The East Gate opened and alone he galloped east, passing the captives to lead the army. I beg you, don’t speak of literary things, but follow him with intent swift as lighting and lofty as clouds.

Recorded on the 18th day of the 11th month of the Jisi year (January 1, 1630) when I was notified of his death by Sun Chengzong.

And again:

With a new work, Wu bei zhi, he memorialized the court; in the dead of night he was never without a book. He stood behind the screen in Wenhua Hall, and placed the imperial book on the imperial desk.\footnote{Wenhua Hall 文華殿 was the part of the palace in which the emperor heard lectures on the classics and history. \textit{HYDCD}, vol. 6, 1529.}

\footnote{Both poems found in Qian Qianyi (1582–1664), \textit{Muzhai chuxue ji}, vol. 1, 596. Note that the year Qian cites is 1630, a \textit{jisi 己巳} year, but that the year Mao died, 1640, was a \textit{jimao 己卯} year. The second character was likely miscopied at some point.}
In these poems, Mao is lauded as a literatus devoted to a hands-on approach to advising the Ming court with *Wu bei zhi*, and insistent on personally participating in the war efforts against the nascent Jurchen state. Mao’s name appears elsewhere in Qian Qianyi’s work, namely in an account of Sun Chengzong’s life, in which Mao Yuanyi “with *Wu bei zhi* under one arm,” presented the book to the emperor and convinced literati in Xi’an that Sun Chengzong was right to accuse a colleague, then Minister of War Wang Zaijin 王在晉, of exaggerating his successes on the northeastern front.\(^{521}\) In Qian’s writings, whether poetry or biography, the book is as much Mao as Mao is the book. Qian’s biography of Mao and his memorial poetry border on hagiographical, much like other early Qing writing.

Other early Qing literati continued to produce hyperbolic descriptions of Mao even when speaking of others with whom he was associated. Ji Dong 計東 (1625–1676) writes a posthumous biography of his teacher, Song Xian 宋獻, who we remember from Chapters 2 and 3 as a prefatory author for *Wu bei zhi* and *juren* in a similar social position to Mao Yuanyi. Ji Dong writes:

> He went to Jiangning all the time to speak to worthy men of courage. He was particularly fond of Mao Yuanyi. Yuanyi was the grandson of Mao Kun. He had talent for both literary and martial studies; he was arrogant and couldn’t reconcile himself to a low status. His family resources were extensive, and he loved to throw money around—he was not at all stingy. He called together all the celebrities in the world and authored *Wu bei zhi* with more than 10,000,000 words. He made friends with Mr. Song, and wrote the book with him joyfully. When the book was finished, he begged Mr. Song to write a preface for it, and submitted it to the palace.

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\(^{521}\) Qian Qianyi, *Muzhai chuxue ji*, vol. 2, juan 47, 1199.
In Chapter 3, we saw how Song Xian contributed to the shaping of the multiple subject “Mao Yuanyi” in conjunction with *Wu bei zhi*. Here we see that this understanding of Mao as both literatus and martial expert continued to be tied to the object “*Wu bei zhi*” for the next generation in the early Qing. This copy of Ji Dong’s work was printed in 1748 (Qianlong period, year 13), but its preface by compiler and friend, Wang Tingyang 王廷揚, is dated to 1708 (Kangxi period, year 47). Given the date Ji Dong died, the biography of Song Xian was likely composed before or during the early Kangxi period (1662–1722). In the early Qing, when Ji and Qian Qianyi were writing, Mao’s memory as an erudite patriot and poet was linked to his production of *Wu bei zhi*.

Above, we saw readers in the late Ming and early Qing creating an interdependent relationship between the compiler-as-object and text-as-object. While this interdependent relationship did not immediately disappear, assessments reflecting primarily on the text *Wu bei zhi* in the early Qing spoke primarily of its comprehensive preservation of rare military texts. Early-Qing writers spoke of *Wu bei zhi* as the most detailed and comprehensive military text available. Wang Yuan 王源 (1648–1710, courtesy name, Kunsheng 崑繩) wrote a preface to *Bingfa yaolüe 兵法要略* (Essentials of military strategy) describing the importance of *Wu bei zhi* as a monument to the emphasis on praxis in military books of the Ming, but its relative inaccessibility to a poor reader. The first part of Wang Yuan’s preface portrays an early-Qing

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*522* Ji Dong 計東 (1625–1676), “Qian Ming taipusi qing Liyang Song gong xingzhuang” 前明太僕寺卿溧陽宋公行狀 (An Account of the Life of Chief Minister of the Court of the Imperial Stud of the Former Ming Mr. Song of Liyang), in *Gaiting shiwen ji 改亭詩文集* (Compiled poetry and prose of Gaiting), in *SKCM, ji bu*, vol. 228, juan 16, 2b.
literatus not so different from Mao Yuanyi himself, with a lifelong interest in military affairs. He describes his education in military studies as a youth, reading military histories, military classics, and books on formations and training. The order mimics the order of topics in *Wu bei zhi*. He then describes the importance of asking experienced soldiers for advice, and the superiority of Ming books like those of Qi Jiguang. He writes:

> Whenever I came across an old hand of the army, I would ask him what he had to say. They were all stories of warfare by ambush and raiding, and didn’t jibe with the highly regulated armies of old. Alas! Unconventional methods allow you to subjugate the enemy, but they have long had nothing to do with military methods [as conceived of by Sunzi]. As for the theories of regulated command, in the end I had no way of getting at their details. It wasn’t until I read *Lianbing zhushu* 練兵諸書 (Various books on training soldiers) by Qi Jiguang (alternative name, Nantang 南塘) and *Xu wujing zongyao* by Zhao Benxue, that I then suddenly gained an understanding….I therefore compiled what I have seen into *Bingfa yaolüe* in 22 chapters, divided into upper, middle, and lower, three sections.

每遇老於行陣者，問之其言。皆野戰之事而與古節制之師不合。嗟乎！野戰可以制勝，而無事於兵法久矣。節制之說，究無從以得其詳，及讀戚南塘《練兵諸書》與趙本學《績武經總要》，而後恍然有得也。余故卽其所見彙為《兵法要略》二十二卷，分上中下三篇。524

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523 Wang Yuan writes: “I’ve loved talking about the military since I was a child. I read Su Shi’s writings on governance, Chen Liang’s *Zhuo gu lun* 船政論 (Discourse on lessons from the past). In my heart I admired them as people. When I was a little older, I studied *Sunzi bingfa* and knew the basics of the techniques of the unorthodox and orthodox, emptiness and fullness; the methods of deploying an army, camping and formations, and training; the use of configurations and designations, weapons and armor; the methods for crossing blades and engaging in battle with cavalry and chariots, on land or sea, for attacking cities and defending fortresses. I didn’t manage to get at their details.” The original reads: 余自幼喜談兵，讀蘇老泉權書，陳同甫酌古論，心慕其為人。稍長學孫武《兵法》略知奇正、虛實之術，而束伍營陣操練之方，形名器甲之用，車騎水陸接刃合戰、攻城守禦之法，概不得其詳焉。See Wang Yuan 王源 (1648–1710), *Juye tang wenji* 居業堂文集 (Collected writings from Juye hall), in XXSK, vol. 1418, juan 12, pp. 9b–10b. Translations of “unorthodox and orthodox” and “emptiness and fullness” are based on Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 42. On the translation of *xing* 形 and *ming* 名 in this context, see Sawyer, *The Seven Military Classics*, 441, n58.

The books Wang cites here are heavily relied upon in Wu bei zhi. It is clear that his reading habits—and the resources he could access—shared similarities with Mao Yuanyi’s library. He then uses the very same medical metaphor that Mao Yuanyi uses in Wu bei zhi to analogize aspects of the study of military affairs to etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of physical disease. He writes:

If you were to analogize it to medicine, the first section records the principles of Yin and Yang, blood and qi, the nature of the organs, and the etiology of the various diseases and the technique to diagnose them by feeling the pulse and the color of the face; the middle section records the effects and nature of the various drugs and techniques of treatment. The last section records famous physicians across the ages in case studies. To use good formulas makes one a commander. Through mastering these three one pursues the famed ancient generals and returns to simple commanders. How difficult this is!

After using this medical metaphor, Wang Yuan cites Wu bei zhi itself as important point of comparison to his own shorter book. He read Wu bei zhi after finishing his own book, and added relevant chapters to supplement his work, glad that there were no major disagreements between Wu bei zhi and his own text:

I first heard that no [book] is more detailed on military methods than Wu bei zhi, but I was poor and couldn’t purchase it. I thought on it for ten years without seeing it. Then, my own book was finished. When I first was able to read it, I found that its gist is not particularly far from my own three-section book. I was delighted that I was in agreement with my predecessor without prior consultation. I worry that it is complicated and imprecise, vast and with few key points. I thereupon selected its simpler and applicable [parts] for what I don’t get to myself. Those things I recorded are in two chapters appended to the middle and end sections of the book and titled, “Supplements.” Hopefully the ways of self-governance and controlling the enemy are completely covered here, and those who study military methods will have a something to use as a mirror and therein find the most important items.

525 Ibid.
Wang’s statement that it took him over a decade to obtain a copy of *Wu bei zhi* implies that in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, *Wu bei zhi* was well-known as a comprehensive military text, but difficult to obtain due to its price—perhaps a result of its size. Wang ends up relying on *Wu bei zhi* to supplement topics of information or military texts that he could not access otherwise.

Still other Kangxi-era literati remember *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi as inaccessible in other ways. In 1667, Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 had his reading notes published. He wrote:

> When Mao Yuanyi’s *Wu bei zhi* was completed, the Wanli emperor read it in the year 1619. The emperor personally lauded his erudition. Yuanyi therefore named his study, “[Hall of] Erudition.” Song Biyu wrote [it for him] in large clerical script. The calligraphy was three chi wide. It was likely the piece of writing Biyu was most proud of in his life. The hall was on the side of Wuding Bridge in Nanjing. I saw it when I was a child. Today, I don’t know where it is.

茅元儀《武備志》成，曾經神宗乙未之覽，天語稱其該博，元儀即顔其堂曰：該博。宋比玉擘窠作八分，書廣三尺，許為比玉生平得意筆，堂在秣陵武定橋側，予㓜時見之。今額不知所在矣。527

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527 The year *yiwei* 乙未, or 1619, is likely incorrect here. The book was not made until 1621. The memorial Mao Yuanyi writes regarding submitting the book to an emperor was not written until the Chongzhen period. See SSJ, *juan*, 1, 7a–12a. Unless one of Mao’s correspondents shared his preface and table of contents with the Wanli emperor before 1621, it is unlikely the date is correct. The passage quoted here can be found in Zhou Lianggong 周亮工, *Yinshu wu shu ying* 因樹屋書影 [Shadows of books from the Yinshu Room], in XXSK, vol. 1134, *juan* 4, 28a.
Here, it is not *Wu bei zhi* that is inaccessible, but material vestiges of the man Mao Yuanyi. Both Mao and *Wu bei zhi* are mourned as a semi-lost part of an era, but are simultaneously noted for their role in the preservation of important texts like Cheng Zongyou’s *Shaolin gunfa* (Methods of the staff from Shaolin Temple). Qian Qianyi’s grandson, Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629–1701) writes a note about his encounter with *Shaolin gunfa*:

Mao Yuanyi excerpted it and carved it into *Wu bei zhi*. [Each entry is] generally copied from a draft, some have both illustrations and mnemonics. Cheng Chongdou 程沖斗 said, “A thousand blows don’t equal a single stab.” So, *Shaolin* is three parts staff methods, and seven parts spear methods. Every spear carries a staff, this gets at a deep [truth] of staff [fighting] methods.

茅元儀採之刻入武備志中，凡從藁本繕寫者，或謂圖訣俱。是鎗法，程沖斗云千打不如一劄，故少陵三分棍法，七分鎗法，兼鎗帶棍，此得于棍法之深者也。528

These publicly available but privately-drafted reminiscences regarding *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi give a clear picture of *Wu bei zhi* as both lost object and something that preserves a lost object. However inaccessible or rare, to these writers, *Wu bei zhi* was a comprehensive and therefore important military text, if only because it organized and provided access to still rarer books of the Ming and prior.

### 6.4.2 An Early-Eighteenth Century Transition

Like the books it quotes, in the mid-eighteenth century *Wu bei zhi* is preserved in part through its excerption in other books, but the relationship between it and Mao is less emphasized. For example, in *Qing liqi tushi* (Pictures and forms of Qing-dynasty...

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528 Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629–1701), *Dushu minqiu ji* 讀書敏求記 [Record of quick searching while reading], *XXSK*, vol. 923, *juan* 3, p. 27b.
ritual vessels) Jiang Pu 蔣溥 (1708–1761) quotes Wu bei zhi at length and cites it as such, especially in Chapters 14 and 15, “Military Preparation Two, Military Tools One” (Wu bei er, wu ju yi 武備二，武具一) and “Military Preparation Three, Military Tools Two” (Wu bei san, wu ju er 武備三，武具二). This extensive quotation of Wu bei zhi is not so different from the habits of citation in Wu bei zhi itself examined in Chapter 2. Wu bei zhi is excerpted in a similar fashion in an even more famous compendium from the Kangxi (1661–1722) and Yongzheng (1723–1735) periods, [Qin ding] Gujin tushu jicheng [欽定古今圖書集成] (Imperially authorized Comprehensive corpus of illustrations and books, from ancient times to now, 1726–28), wherein Wu bei zhi takes up substantial space in juan 300, which comprises the subsection on “Military Administration” (rongzheng 戎政) in the section on “Governing” (jingji 經濟). Instead, the names of the book and its author appear most often in gazetteers, though rarely together.

Compiled on behalf of the new imperial government, often by and for local gentry, gazetteers of the Kangxi (1661–1722) and Yongzheng (1723–1735) periods erase mention of Wu bei zhi, but acknowledge Mao Yuanyi as a poet and participant in the defense of the late Ming. Where Wang Yuan glossed over Mao the poet and patriot in the late seventeenth century, he was officially remembered as such in gazetteers. Wu bei zhi itself, however, was excised from Mao’s

529 Jiang Pu 蔣溥 (1708–1761), Qing liqi tushi 清禮器圖式 [Pictures and forms Qing-dynasty ritual vessels], copy of the Wenyuan ge siku quanshu copy, in GJK, juan 14, and juan 15.
530 Chen Menglei, Jiang Tingxi, Yang Jialuo, Long Jidong, compilers, Qin ding gujin tushu jicheng. “Imperially authorized” is often left off references to this text. Translations of this title and its subsections are from Wilkinson. “Governing” is the sixth section of this compendium, and “Military Administration” is the thirtieth subsection, counting from the beginning of the entire compendium. See Wilkinson, Chinese History: A New Manual, 959–960. 531 Qiao Na has identified several other authors who excerpt Wu bei zhi in the Qing dynasty, for example, Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1856), Wang Zongyi 汪宗沂 (1837–1906), and Hong Jun 洪鈞 (1839–1893). See Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi Wu bei zhi tanxi,” 56.
memory. A few Kangxi-era and Yongzheng-era gazetteers contain a number of essays by Mao Yuanyi, list Mao’s other works in their bibliographies, and mention his name in the biographies of relevant late-Ming generals (eg. Sun Chengzong), but generally do not mention Wu bei zhi.532 Matthew Mosca argues that the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods saw moderate censorship and persecution of those who would write anti-Manchu or pro-Ming sentiments.533 I hypothesize that this perhaps accounts for the separation of Mao and Wu bei zhi into independent objects in the minds of compilers and authors in the available textual evidence from this period. The language excoriating the Manchus in Wu bei zhi was more problematic for a Qing gazetteer to celebrate than the poetic and military achievements (defeats) of Mao Yuanyi the individual: his loyalty was rhetorically detached from his virulently anti-Manchu writings.

This separation of man and book in this period presages the greater erasure of both in the Qianlong period (1736–1796). To my knowledge, extant gazetteers dating to the Qianlong reign do not mention Mao Yuanyi or Wu bei zhi. However, before erasure came the lesser shifts we have observed above. After the fall of the Ming and before the beginnings of official Qing censorship in the Qianlong period (1735–1796), Wu bei zhi was known for its comprehensive coverage of Ming sources both common and rare; it was known as the definitive work on the military health of the state up to this point in time, and the work of a late-Ming poet, patriot, and military aficionado representative of the moment before the Ming fell. The objects “Mao Yuanyi” and “Wu bei zhi” were gradually detached from one another in the late Kangxi and Yongzheng


periods. This would change more radically with the censorship and book-collecting projects of Qianlong in the late eighteenth century. Before the Qianlong “inquisition,” however, *Wu bei zhi* managed to make its way to Japan and Europe, resulting in further material and immaterial instantiations of the book. Given the wildly different context in which Japanese and European readers encountered *Wu bei zhi*, and obvious changes to the material object(s) in these places, *Wu bei zhi* would evolve into quite a different abstract, epistemic object in readers’ minds. In Japan it would retain just enough similarity with Chinese instantiations of *Wu bei zhi* to invoke that title’s history, and in Europe the title would be forgotten. In both places, *Wu bei zhi* and its author would no longer be interdependent entities.

### 6.4.3 *Wu bei zhi* in Japan

*Wu bei zhi* most likely found its way to Japan between 1628 and 1644, via smugglers traveling from Zhejiang to the Ryukyu Islands (琉球) and then on to the Satsuma Domain (薩摩藩), at the southern end of the island of Kyūshū.\(^{534}\) The military content of *Wu bei zhi* further meant that it, theoretically, should not have been exported.\(^{535}\) Even if *Wu bei zhi* itself were not

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534 See Zhao Fengxiang 趙鳳翔 and Guan Zengjian 關增建, “Ming mo Qing chu hanji dong chuan beijing xia de *Wu bei zhi* ru Ri kao,” 25–29 and 56. Zhao and Guan make clever use of ships’ manifests from the 18th and 19th centuries and mentions of *Wu bei zhi* in a Chinese source published between 1628 and 1644 remarking on smuggler’s transmission of *Wu bei zhi* to Japan. See page 27.

535 The Ming dynasty’s stringent ban on private maritime trade outside the official tribute system loosened marginally in 1567 in response to a piracy (wokou 倭寇) crisis in Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong during the 1550s and 1560s. Trade after the 1567 “opening the seas” policy (kaihai 開海) was still limited in scope, and, theoretically, not supposed to engage Japanese merchants. See Lim, “From Haijin to Kaihai,” 1–26. In addition to the Chinese trade prohibitions, during the first half of the seventeenth century, the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600–1868) implemented increasingly stringent policies regarding Japanese contact with outsiders, up to and including
Illicit, its passage from Zhejiang to Ryukyu, and then to Satsuma, certainly was. Implemented in the 1630s, the Japanese “closed country” (Sakoku 鎖国) policy targeting the spread of Christianity in Japan and the influence of Western nations, in particular the Portuguese, came on the heels of a war lost to Ming China, the Imjin War (or, “First Great East Asian War,” 1592–1598). The new Tokugawa regime in Japan struggled with how to treat foreign trade in the wake of its predecessor’s loss. Mary Elizabeth Berry argues that the Imjin war, the internal conflict leading to the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, and the urbanization of the Japanese population “provided an exceptional commonality of experience that transcended place and station,” creating a “reading public.” Wu bei zhi would enter Japan in the period immediately following, emerging in reprint in 1664 (Year 4 of the Kanbun period, 寛文4年) with the title “Bubishi” (still written 武備志), just as the government battened down the external hatches and as, internally, commercial print exploded and nurtured a nascent awareness of a Japanese nation.

Wu bei zhi in Japan was distinctly early modern, commercial, and encyclopedic. Mary Elizabeth Berry describes a transformation from a medieval to an early modern textual culture in the seventeenth century, characterized by new interest in the classification and collection of information and the production of texts for a new “imagined audience.” She writes:

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the infamous “closed country” (Sakoku 鎖国) policy, which limited foreign trade to the port of Nagasaki from the mid-1630s through 1853.

536 On the Imjin War, see the following volumes: Lewis, ed., The East Asian War, 1592–1598; and Swope, A Dragon’s Head and a Serpent’s Tail.

537 Berry, Japan in Print, 33–34.


539 Berry, Japan in Print, 21–22.
The point is not that orderly information on worldly affairs did not circulate before the seventeenth century, but that it barely existed. In effect, the texts of the information library represent a quiet revolution in knowledge—one that divides the early modern period from all previous time. They invented for popular audiences a Japan.540

The material form of the 1664 Japanese edition of *Wu bei zhi* is considerably different from the late-Ming and early-Qing Chinese editions and reflects the title’s place in this commercialized, urbanizing, newly pacified Japan. The last page of the last volume is devoted to information on the printers. Black borders surround each marginal comment, and are sometimes aligned only haphazardly with the borders of the main text. Japanese reading marks are printed along each column of characters to assist readers less confident with literary Chinese. A modern reader might be struck by the foreignness that pervades each page. None of these differences would have made the book illegible to a Chinese reader, but they do force the reader to question why a Japanese reader might have been interested in a book so clearly devoted to the classification and organization of knowledge for Ming-dynasty patriots as *Wu bei zhi*. *Wu bei zhi* was quoted in Japanese military texts as a source regarding the history of the Imjin War,541 and exerted considerable influence on the development of coastal defense strategies during the first century of the Edo period (1603–1868).542 This tallies with Berry’s discussion of the importance of

cartographic texts during this period for the production of an imagined Japan. The 1664 edition of \textit{Wu bei zhi} was clearly a commercial printing, one meant to assign credit to the publishing house and catering to an imagined public.

The production of this edition must also be understood in the context of changes in military studies in the Edo period. Like Berry, Alexey Lushchenko identifies the seventeenth century as a period of transition between medieval Japan and early modern Japan. However, he more specifically describes a transition from the syncretism of “divination-based,” medieval Japanese “military ways” (j. \textit{Heihō}, \textit{hyōhō}, ch. \textit{Bingfa} 兵法), and “this-worldly and practical,” early modern “military studies” (j. \textit{heigaku}, \textit{hyōgaku}, ch. \textit{Bingxue} 兵学). The seventeenth century also saw the systematization of the education of the warrior classes in military studies, and the division of military studies into five major schools. Although the transmission of texts belonging to these schools was largely secretive, other kinds of military books (j. \textit{Gunsho} 軍書) not associated with any particular school were commercially available. This included the Chinese military classics and Ming commentaries on them, which were important across schools of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Berry, \textit{Japan in Print}, Chapter 1, especially 32–49, Chapter 2, especially pp. 58–60. Berry writes that information from beyond Japan’s borders was quite limited. While “Chinese books, in Chinese and in translation, did selectively make it into print in Japan….the stringently enforced prohibitions against foreign travel—and the careful oversight of foreign books imported at Nagasaki—kept low the volume of immediate and practical information about outside worlds.” See pp. 51–52. Berry’s point is about the limited opportunities for Japanese authors to travel abroad. She acknowledges that “information texts” from China, especially those with maps, were important in Japan in this period. \textit{Wu bei zhi}’s relatively wide distribution in Japan suggests that the importance of foreign books should be further examined.}

\footnote{Lushchenko, “Discussing the \textit{Tale of Heike} in the Edo Period,” 71–72, 80.}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 66, 80–81.}
\end{footnotes}
Japanese military studies in this period. Wu bei zhi, or Bubishi in Japan, can be included in this category. Its re-publication in its entirety, including the section on divination techniques, supports Lushchenko’s argument that the esoteric practices common to medieval “military ways” continued to be important as “military studies” became more systematized.

In Japan, Bubishi, as a text considered in the abstract, an epistemic object, is stripped of the context of the Manchu invasion that informs Chinese reception and memory of Mao Yuanyi and Wu bei zhi in the early Qing. Instead, it is shaped by the context of the rise of Berry’s commercial “library of information,” and catered to an imagined audience of samurai and daimyo involved in military studies as part of educated governance in the new Tokugawa peacetime. Mao Yuanyi is less important to this audience’s understanding of Bubishi—it’s martyr author no longer integral to the object itself. When shadows of Wu bei zhi appear in Europe in the eighteenth century, Mao Yuanyi and the title “Wu bei zhi” are erased entirely.

6.4.4 Wu bei zhi in Europe

Encyclopedic texts in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries incorporated much information on Asia, China in particular, gathered and translated by Jesuit priests. Jürgen Osterhammel argues that Enlightenment-era intellectuals “subjected what they saw in Asia to the same standards of rational analysis and judgment that they applied to political and social conditions in Europe. Asia was demystified and made comprehensible within a single cognitive

546 Ibid., 82–83. Parts of Wu bei zhi appeared in secretly transmitted texts. For example, an Okinawan karate text by the same name (Bubishi) quotes parts of it. See Ro Gai, “Okinawa-den Bubishi no kenkyū sho hon no keitō kankei ni tsuite,” 31–70; and Ro Gai, “Okinawa-den Bubishi no kenkyū—Okinawa karate to no kakawari o chūshin ni.”

continuum."548 In fact, others point out, China became a model of “imagined permanence and stability” and “structur[ed] fantasies of both enlightened universalism and enlightened absolutism.”549 The textual manifestations of this were encyclopedic compilations of knowledge on China gathered from “travelogues, missionary writings and collections of letters,” and military knowledge was no exception.550 Tracing the specific Chinese sources that Jesuits and other travelers in Asia used to describe Chinese institutions and customs is not always possible without statements from the compilers and translators of these materials. I have not come across specific citations of Wu bei zhi by European authors, but it is possible that Wu bei zhi was consulted by authors of texts describing Chinese military institutions, theory, and practices.

Wu bei zhi was not reprinted in Europe as it was in Japan, but echoes of Chinese statecraft encyclopedism can be found in encyclopedic works by Jesuit priests who had worked in China, including Wu bei zhi. Alexey Lushchenko states that Joseph Amiot’s (1718–1793) translations of the Seven Military Classics in Lart militaire des Chinois (1772) are based in part on commentaries in Wu bei zhi,551 but I have been unable to find corroborating statements from Amiot himself. Materially, Amiot’s work looks very little like Wu bei zhi in its woodblock-printed form. But its organization lends credence to comparisons between shared concerns of European and Asian encyclopedists, and the possibility of intertextual borrowing of formats or practices of information organization. Lart militaire des Chinois contains translations of six of the seven military classics, ordered in the same order as Wu bei zhi, but leaving out San lüe

548 Osterhammel, Unfabling the East, 31.
549 Tautz, Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment, 4.
550 Lehner, China in European Encyclopedias, 113, 212–214.
551 Lushchenko, “Discussing the Tale of Heike,” 35. For more on L’art militaire des Chinois, see Lehner, China in European Encyclopedias, 1700–1850, 212; Smentek, "Picturing Chinese Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century France.”
(Sunzi, Wuzi, Sima fa, Liu tao, Weiliaozhi, Li Weigong wen dui). These annotated translations are followed by a section titled “Instruction sur l’Exercice Militaire,” which contains diagrams and instructions for military formations and training with weapons that are re-drawn in a European style, but look remarkably similar to those in Wu bei zhi. So, too, are the diagrams of military uniforms in this section. Amiot seems to have imitated the format of Chinese encyclopedic statecraft books, beginning with the main text with the classical texts forming the foundation of the field, and ending with detailed information on technology and techniques. These practices of information organization are not unlike those found in European encyclopedias and “reference works,” wherein “Large collections of textual material, consisting typically of quotations, examples, or bibliographical references, were used in many times and places as a way of facilitating access to a mass of texts considered authoritative.” Ann Blair points out that the European and Chinese reaction to early modern information overload involved “methods of information management that are still recognizable today.” Although these practices of information organization in Wu bei zhi were not identical to those used in European encyclopedias and reference works, those practices stemmed from similar priorities. Lart militaire des Chinois mirrors those shared practices. Wu bei zhi (or its kin) left traces in European literature on China, but Wu bei zhi, the material or immaterial object, did not exist in Europe outside these traces.

553 Blair, Too Much to Know, 1.
554 Ibid., 11.
6.4.5  *Wu bei zhi* under the Qianlong Emperor

Above, we discussed early-Qing understandings of the objects *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi. Around the same time its traces appear in Europe, these early-Qing understandings underwent a transformation in China with the advent of Qianlong’s “literary inquisition” of the late eighteenth century.555 Qianlong’s censorship of materials critical of the Qing state or disparaging toward the Manchus coincided with the collection of materials to include in the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Library of the four treasuries), a process which R. Kent Guy has described as the Qing state’s demonstration of its legitimacy via “stewardship of the canon.”556 Censorship and the collection of books for the *Siku quanshu* were preceded by the collection and editing of materials for the *Jiutong* 九通 (The nine encyclopedic histories of institutions of government), another series of government-sponsored projects to further the stewardship of administrative history.557 Alongside the collection of a Chinese-language canon and history, the Qing state created lists of books that ought to purged, banned, or censored. *Wu bei zhi* appears in both projects of conservation and projects of censorship, apparently conducive to both these aims despite their tension. By 1775, *Wu bei zhi* appeared on two lists of prohibited books, *Jinshu zongmu* 禁書總目 (Comprehensive bibliography of prohibited books) and *Wei’ai shumu* 違礙書目 (Bibliography of books violating taboos).558 However, it is also often cited in *Qinding xu*

555 The term “literary inquisition” comes from Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Chien -lung*.
558 See Yao Jinyuan 姚覲元, ed., *Qingdai jinhui shumu* 清代禁燬書目, 補遺 (Bibliographies of books prohibited in the Qing dynasty), page 106, and Sun Dianqi 孫殿起, ed., *Qingdai jin shu zhi jian lu* 清代禁書知見錄 (Record of prohibited books of the Qing known and seen), page 137, (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1957); Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* tanxi,” 27.
wenxian tongkao 欽定續文獻通考 (Imperially commissioned continued general history of institutions and critical examination of documents and studies), compiled from 1747–1784.\textsuperscript{559} In this circumstance, it was used to corroborate facts about the administrative history of the Ming dynasty.\textsuperscript{560} Censorship of a prohibited book was clearly not so complete that quotations of its non-sensitive material was avoided in government publications. \textsuperscript{561}

With regard to books like \textit{Wu bei zhi} that stood in a gray area somewhere between prohibition and preservation, ideologically dangerous but technically useful, the official strategy seems to have been to dismiss its purported singularity. \textit{Siku quanshu zongmu} 四庫全書總目 (Complete bibliography of the library of the four treasuries) records the following entry:

\textit{Wu bei zhi lüe} (Abridged treatise on military preparedness) in five chapters, the copy held by the palace, composed by Fu Yu of the current dynasty. Yu’s courtesy name was Fushui. He was from Yiwu. This compilation just copies excerpts of the several military classics and Mao Yuanyi’s \textit{Wu bet zhi} of the Ming dynasty. Otherwise there is not much worth looking at in it.

《武備志略》五卷，內府藏本，國朝傅禹撰，禹字服水，義烏人，是編惟鈔撮武經諸書及明茅元儀《武備志》。別無特見。\textsuperscript{562}

\textsuperscript{559} Translations of \textit{Jiutong} and \textit{Qinding xu wenxian tongkao} are based on those in Wilkinson, \textit{Chinese History: A New Manual}, 646–648.

\textsuperscript{560} Ji Huang 稣璜, et al., eds., \textit{Qinding xu wenxian tongkao} 欽定續文獻通考 (Imperially commissioned continued general history of institutions and critical examination of documents and studies, 1784), in WYGSK, juan 132 and 134. On this, see Guo Yige, “\textit{Qinding xu wenxian tongkao jingji kao} de mulu xue jiazhi yu wenxian jiazhi,” 3–11; or Wilkinson, \textit{Chinese History: A New Manual}, 52–43, 647–648, for translations of titles related to \textit{Wenxian tongkao}.

\textsuperscript{561} Mosca points out that early-Qing, encyclopedic works on frontier regions were often “contaminated” with anti-Manchu language. Early-Qing texts themselves might not be censored or banned, but the Ming sources they drew on might be. See, for example \textit{Gujin tushu jicheng} 古今圖書集成. Mosca, “The Literati Re-writing of China,” 109.

\textsuperscript{562} Yong Rong, \textit{Qinding siku quanshu zongmu}, vol. 7, juan 100, zi bu, 27a.
If, in the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods, Mao Yuanyi was reduced to “author of histories and poetry, adviser to Sun Chengzong,” and Wu bei zhi simply neglected, in the Qianlong period, Wu bei zhi in its entirety was sometimes identified as an ideologically dangerous object, but in its constituent pieces it was considered unworthy of note unless mined for historical facts.

Wu bei zhi was not purged from collections by an omnipotent Manchu imperial state, but was identified as worthy of wary attention in a collaborative effort between the state and literati who “seemed content to function within the existing order, turning court initiatives to their own ends wherever possible.”563 Guy has questioned to what degree Qianlong and his government were actually concerned with rooting out all “seditious” material. He argues that we should consider not a false dichotomy between Manchu state and Han intellectuals, but rather ask how intellectuals collaborated in the “articulation of cultural identity,” and how “the government was guided by the opinions and perceptions of its most articulate subjects, serving more as an arbitrator than as an ideological policeman.”564 Literati content to pursue other goals ceded the authority to censor terms and materials derogatory to the Qing state, like Wu bei zhi, in this relatively stable period. It might be more appropriate to think of Wu bei zhi as one of many objects the Qing viewed with circumspection, and that Han literati found outdated once access to information gathered via first hand observation of current events and technologies was available.

Matthew Mosca has argued that in the early Qing, and the Qianlong period in particular, Ming-dynasty statecraft texts, especially those on geography in the borderlands, became obsolete because the Qing dynasty had bannermen engaging in new studies of areas outside the Ming borders, but within the Qing borders. He writes, “For the Han literati, Inner Asian affairs were,

563 Guy, The Emperor’s Four Treasuries, 49.
564 Guy, The Emperor’s Four Treasuries, 5, 156.
par excellence, the sphere of the empire’s politics most dominated by bannerman insiders, where their right to inquire, still less to participate, was most starkly circumscribed.” 565 Thus, “obsolete,” pre-1644, Chinese-language accounts of Mongolia, like those found in Wu bei zhi, continued to be relied upon after 1644 despite their ambiguous status. While “private geographies,” like the last section of Wu bei zhi, “were not vigorously persecuted in the Qianlong period, it was unquestionably far less hospitable for the genre than earlier Qing reigns or the period after 1799.” 566 This is evident in scholars’ comments on Wu bei zhi and Mao Yuanyi from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, wherein they paint it as an object through which one remembers the failures of the Ming, rather than an active site of knowledge production about the military or the borderlands.

Two kinds of dangers to the late-Ming state are named in Qianlong-period comments on Mao Yuanyi: factional politics at court and corrupt officials. This coincided with the formation of a narrative of Ming decline in the Qianlong period designed to combat factionalism in the Qing court and justify Qing rule. 567 For example, Chen Ding’s 陳鼎 (b. 1650) early-Qing Donglin lie zhuan 東林列傳 (Biographies of the Donglin) was included in the Siku quanshu and came with an appended note from Qianlong himself condemning partisanship for inciting dynastic instability. 568 Other Qianlong-period scholars referenced Mao’s work and life in discussing the collation of books listing Donglin partisans. Zhang Jian’s 張鑒 (1768–1850) editorial post-face to Donglin tongzhi lu 東林同志錄 (Record of confederates of the Donglin faction) refers to Mao

566 Ibid., 111.
568 See the Qianlong emperor’s preface: “Yuzhi ti Donglin lie zhuan” 御製提東林列傳 [Imperial preface to Donglin lie zhuan], in Chen Ding, Donglin lie zhuan, in GJK. Based on the copy in Wenyuan ge Siku quanshu.
Yuanyi’s *Zhangji* 掌記 (Record in my palm), which discusses the problems of factionalism in the late Ming.\(^{569}\) Zhang Jian cites Mao’s own work to help calculate just how many people were involved in the destructive factionalism of the late Ming.\(^{570}\) Zhang’s passage is not dated, but Zhang writes throughout the Qianlong, Jiaqing (1796–1820), and Daoguang periods on the problem of Donglin partisanship, which was clearly a contemporary concern. Lu Wenchao盧文弨 (1716–1795), another eighteenth-century author, writes of corruption in the late Ming, using Mao Yuanyi’s poetry as evidence of its prevalence. In his evaluation of Sun Chengzong’s biography in the *Mingshi* 明史 (History of the Ming), he writes the following of Mao:

> Under the retinue of [Sun Chengzong] was an adviser, Mao Yuanyi, courtesy name Zhisheng, of Gui’an. He often assisted with the planning of military commissions. He later was captured and exiled to a border garrison. He had ten or so poetry and miscellaneous prose compilations. One of his poems reads:

> An enclosed borderland is not hard to pacify, but disorder in court is easily spurred. A full grown man who cannot come up with a plan, shouldn’t be paid for half a post. And a man who hasn’t heard of his nation’s disgrace, will battle over only a word. The wind and dust of a dynasty arise, and disperse as though to fly or float. For a blink or two a moment’s peace, but even standing on the wings of a great bird,\(^{571}\) Pathetic little me could never unite them; I might as well attend my nets at most.

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\(^{569}\) Mao Yuanyi wrote *Zhangji* during the time he was in Jiangcun江村 with Lu Shanji鹿善繼 (1575–1636), another Donglin sympathizer who sheltered him from 1626–1628. See Mao Yuanyi, *Zhangji* 掌記 (Record in my palm), in *SKJH*, ji bu, vol. 110, 396–405 (modern pagination). *Zhangji* describes the political events of the late Ming. See Ren Daobin, “Mao Yuanyi shengping, zhushu chu tan,” 247. See also Mao’s preface to *Shimin* 石民, *Jiangcun ji* 江村集, in *SKJH*, ji bu, vol. 70.

\(^{570}\) Zhang Jian, “Shu Donglin tongzhi luhou” 書東林同志錄後 [Postface written after Tongzhi lu]. in *Dongqing* 东清, guan ji, see vol. 186, yi ji juan qi wen qi 乙集卷七文七 [second collection, seventh chapter, passage seven], 5ab.

\(^{571}\) The word *feiyuan* 飛鳶, literally, means a flying eagle. *HYDCD*, vol. 12, 704. It is related to the expression *tieyuan* 跖鳶, literally, “dragging eagle,” which refers to a story from the *Hanshu*, wherein even eagles struggle to fly through “sickly miasmas” (zhangqi瘴氣). It later refers to troubles of all kinds. *HYDCD*, vol. 10, 442. The phrase invoked with these words reads: *yang shi feiyuan tie tietie duo shui zhong* 仰視飛鳶跕跕墮水中 (I raised my eyes to see flying eagles falling into the water).
[In] this poem, [Mao] gnashes his teeth over the court’s ruination of the state’s affairs, calling out selfishness and bemoaning competitiveness, which made it so that loyal gentlemen could not be had; [he thus] hits the mark exactly on the corruption at the end of the Ming. Zhisheng was an uninhibited personality. The meter and style of his poetry was not pure or rich, and many works were the product of houses of ill repute. But, he could turn around to join the army and meet the problems of the day. He courageously advanced daring propositions, and held profound opinions hitting the heart of current affairs. He can indeed be considered a heroic gentleman.

其幕下有歸安茅元儀字止生者，常贊畫軍務，後亦被逮謫戍，有詩集及雜說十數種。其一詩云：

邊圍不難靜，廊廟易爲喧，
七尺若弗計，半職不肯捐，
國辱如弗聞，努力爭片言，
一朝風塵起，其散類飛煙，
瞬息得少安，但誇飛鳶肩，
鄙夫不可羣，不如守漁筌。

此詩切齒於廟堂之僨國事者，徇私喧競而使忠義之士不得有，爲最切中明末之弊。止生性豪邁，其詩格調不醇，又多狹邪之作，然能閒關從軍遇事，勇往危言，高論切中事情，固可謂豪傑之士。572

Here, Mao Yuanyi appears in a reading note that discusses the insufficiency of the content of Sun Chengzong’s *Mingshi* biography. Lu finds more detailed information in Sun’s own poetry and in Mao’s. The author writing here does not write in favor of the Ming, per say, but rather lauds Mao’s frustration with what, in the eighteenth century, were seen as Ming-dynasty state failures, military, administrative, and moral. During the Qianlong period, the behavior of *Wu bei zhi*’s compiler was fair game, even if the reasons behind and fact of his writing *Wu bei zhi* are left untouched. Mosca argues that Han literati continued to write about the state after 1700, and through the Qianlong period, but the urge to comprehensively chart relevant information in statecraft tomes like *Wu bei zhi* was secondary to their care not to write anything potentially

572 Lu Wenchao, *Dushi zhaji* 讀史札記 [Notes from reading the histories], in *XXSK*, vol 452, 29b.
seditious. The “circumspection” with which *Wu bei zhi* and other geographical and statecraft tomes were treated in this period began to change after Qianlong’s death.⁵⁷³

### 6.4.6 *Wu bei zhi* in the mid-Nineteenth Century

After the early Qing, *Wu bei zhi* was not reprinted until the Daoguang period (1820–1850). Qiao Na recognizes two printings of the Daoguang-era, moveable-type edition distinguishable from each other by their paper and print quality.⁵⁷⁴ The formatting of each page is decidedly different from earlier editions. Most distinctive about this edition, however, is the inclusion of extra material after Mao Yuanyi’s own preface, in which “the Eastern barbarians” is replaced with “weapons of war” (*gan’ge* 干戈). The other prefaces are all omitted. Instead, there are several excerpts from the official history of the Ming, *Mingshi*, and the biography of Mao written by Qian Qianyi in the late seventeenth century. The biography has been partially translated above. The excerpts from the *Mingshi* (*Mingshi jielu* 明史節錄) give new insight into why the book might have been reprinted at this moment. The first excerpt is from the biography of Sun Chengzong, which places Mao Yuanyi at the center of Sun’s advocacy for a more aggressive strategy of defense in the north of the Great Wall in the 1620s. It reads as follows:

The Grand Coordinator of Liaodong, Zhang Fengyi (j.s. 1613) was timid, repeatedly arguing in favor of defending [only as far north as] Shanhai Pass. [Sun] Chengzong was displeased, and then went outside the pass on an inspection tour reaching Ningyuan. He collected the plans of the various officials. He collected many, as directed by Fengyi. Ma Shilong (1594–1634) alone advocated defending the Zhonghou Command. But, Yuan Chonghuan (1584–1630), Lu Shanji (1575–1636), and Vice General Mao Yuanyi advocated forcefully to defend Ningyuan. [Sun] Chengzong subscribed to this plan, and subsequently commanded that accomplished elder statesmen like Yuan Chonghuan and Man Gui (d. 1630) be employed to defend it. When the Chongzhen emperor ascended to

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⁵⁷⁴ Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* tanxi,” 22.
the throne, Wang Zaijin (d.1643) was appointed Minister of War. He hated that Chengzong constantly spoke so freely. Shilong and Yuanyi were befuddled that commanders of the central government managed to ruin affairs in the north and instigated the administration to speak out with one voice, slandering Chengzong and preventing him from leaving the pass. (Biography of Sun Chengzong.)

遼東巡撫張鳯翼怯,復主守關議,承宗不悅,乃出關巡視抵寧遠,集將吏議,所守衆多,如鳯翼指。獨馬世龍請守中後所。而袁崇煥、鹿善繼及副將茅元儀力請守寧遠,承宗然之議,乃定令祖大壽興功,崇煥、滿桂守之。莊烈帝即位,王在晉入爲兵部尚書,恨承宗不置極論。世龍及元儀熒惑樞輔壞關事,又嗾臺省交口,詆承宗以沮其出。（孫承宗傳）

Sun Chengzong’s biography is not the only one in the Mingshi to situate Mao Yuanyi as a key advocate for an aggressive frontier policy against the Manchus. The biography of Man Gui, mentioned in Sun’s biography, is also excerpted in the Daoguang edition of Wu bei zhi, and gives Mao credit for suggesting Man Gui for the command of the defense of Ningyuan. It reads:

Chengzong memorialized advocating going outside the pass to recover Ningyuan, asking who could defend it. Ma Shilong recommended Sun Jian and Li Chengxian. Chengzong didn’t approve either. Yuan Chonghuan and Mao Yuanyi proposed that Man Gui could do it. But, they didn’t dare request that he be Commander of the Army of the Center. Sun Chengzong said: “Of course he can. Why are you asking about the Army of the Center?” Man Gui spoke to him and enthusiastically appealed to be sent to war. Chengzong organized a banquet that very day to personally bid him farewell. Gui arrived at Ningyuan and was of one mind with Yuan Chonghuan. The city’s ramparts stood tall, and it became a city of strategic importance. (Biography of Man Gui.)

承宗議出關修復寧遠，問誰可守者。馬世龍薦孫諫及李承先。承宗皆不許。袁崇煥、茅元儀進曰滿桂可。但爲公中軍不敢請耳。承宗曰：既可。安問中軍呼？桂語之慨然請行，承宗即日置酒親爲之餞。桂至寧遠與崇煥協心，城築屹然成重鎮。（滿桂傳）575

These two excerpts from the official biographies of Sun Chengzong and Man Gui produced during the Qing give insight into what about Ming martyrs and patriots could be celebrated during the Daoguang period. Note that although celebrations of Mao as a loyal, Ming-era, 575 Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi, Daoguang edition, Held at University of Toronto, volume 1.
military expert have made a reappearance, precisely who the Ming dynasty was fighting is not stated. Discussing the historical actions of loyal Ming servants was no longer dangerous. So long as there was nothing disparaging said about the Qing regime, loyalty and clever strategy were to be celebrated. In the last sections of copies of the Daoguang edition, where foreign peoples are described, all descriptions of the “Jurchens” are omitted, but publishers were not afraid to begin reprinting known Ming sources on statecraft.576

Mosca writes that after 1799, Han literati began to slowly revive their claims to participate in “comprehensive” scholarship on the entirety of the empire, overcoming “lack of current and detailed information, and of ‘intellectual sovereignty.’” This was marked by a resurgence in interest in military affairs.577 The reception of Wu bei zhi during and after the Jiaqing period and its reprinting in the Daoguang period confirm this trend. In both the Jiaqing and Daogugang periods book collectors and readers frequently commented on Wu bei zhi’s importance to the project of preserving rare materials. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), for example, writes in a catalog of his own collections:

This book is divided into five sections: Details on Secrets of the Army and Soldiers, Historical Anecdotes of Strategy, Systems of Troop Formations and Lines, Military Supplies and Transport, and Record of Divination and Geography. Of all the writings of ancient and modern military experts, there are none he does not excerpt and arrange [in it].

是書以軍兵訣詳，戰略故，陣線制，軍資乘，占度載，分部為五，凡古今兵家言無不採輯。578

576 Note that while the reprinting of late-Ming statecraft works picked up in the Daoguang period, the process of affirming the moral actions of Ming loyalists, while condemning Ming officials who helped found the Qing began with the Qianlong emperor. See Chan. "Official Historiography and Ideological Indoctrination in High Qing: Emperor Qianlong's Compilation of the ‘Erchen Zhuan’ and ‘Nichen Zhuan,’” 253-74.
577 Ibid., 113.
578 Ruan Yuan, Wenxuan lou cangshu ji, juan 2, 47a.
Ruan Yuan misquotes the titles of several of the major five sections of *Wu bei zhi*, and says only that he had acquired a block-printed edition (*kanben* 刊本), not which edition. Others are more specific. In his reading notes on divination texts, Ling Yangzao 凌揚藻 (1760–1845) writes that he managed to glimpse a manuscript copy of *Wu bei zhi* while traveling in the South, and lists ten titles of divination books quoted in 19 chapters in *Wu bei zhi*.579 Dong Shixi 董士錫 (1782–1831) writes in a preface to a book on the *Dunjia* divination method,

*Yanbo diaosou ge* (The song of the old fisherman hermit) describes the *dunjia* method, the functions of the sun, moon, and stars, causing movement and stillness, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. This theory is good for prognostication of Yin and Yang in the military, and pursuit of good fortune and avoidance of bad in human affairs is determined therein. It used to be said that Zhao Pu was ordered to write it, Luo Tong of Luling made it into a song....This must mean that Pu wrote some [of it], and Tong reduced it to a song. [Now.] it cannot be obtained and described in detail. The Renzong court (1022–1063) commanded Librarian Yang Weide to write *Jingyou dunjia fuying jing* (Jingyou classic of dunjia method omens). This book is preserved in excerpts in Mao Yuanyi’s *Wu bei zhi*. Today, only [*Gujin* tushu jicheng] (Collection of illustrations and writings from ancient to recent times) and a manuscript copy of the Fan family of Zhejiang preserve it in its entirety, and the Fans’ copy is better.

Each of these authors argues or implies that *Wu bei zhi* is a valuable source preserving pre-Qing texts otherwise lost or difficult to obtain. Note that the materials these literati are concerned with


580 Dong Shixi, *Qiwulun zhai wenji*, *juan* 1, 9b–10a. The Fan family likely refers to the owners of the famous private library, Tianyi Pavilion (*Tianyi ge* 天一閣). For some basic facts about the Tianyi Pavilion and its importance in the history of book collection in China, see Xu Liangxiong, “*Tianyi Ge zai Zhongguo cangshu wenhuashi zhong de diwei*,” 81–83.
are primarily *Wu bei zhi*’s divination and military administration sections—sections that could still be actively used and studied in the mid-nineteenth century. They do not discuss the sections on geography, which, like most late-Ming geographies, were obsolete after Qianlong-period projects mapping the Qing empire outside of China proper and other geopolitical developments. In this period, the object, *Wu bei zhi*, was thought to preserve a Han discourse on statecraft. Efforts to preserve these lost materials after the loosening of Qianlong-era prohibitions were materialized in the Daoguang-era, moveable-type *Wu bei zhi*.

All of the men mentioned above wrote about *Wu bei zhi* after the death of Qianlong, right within the period Mosca identifies as the point where Han literati reclaimed authority over private statecraft studies due to the demands of a bureaucracy and military infrastructure struggling with rebellions and foreign intrusion.\(^581\) In the Jiaqing period, Han literati in the provincial bureaucracy began to outnumber Manchu bureaucrats. Although the Jiaqing emperor failed to completely eradicate factional influences in his bureaucracy after his father’s death, the impeachment of Heshen 和珅 (Manchu: Hešen, 1750–1799) in 1799 brought with it new space for Han literati to propose reform.\(^582\) Circles of Han literati reformers who rose to prominence in this period have been identified as the predecessors to statecraft circles that would arise in the Daoguang period, and coalesce in the 1860s with the men responsible for suppressing the Taiping Rebellion.\(^583\)

\(^{582}\) Jones and Kuhn, “Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion,” 107–108, 118.
\(^{583}\) *Ibid.*, 118. In this period, poetry circles were as important to the socialization of nascent statecraft luminaries as in the late Ming. On the Xuannan Poetry Club of this period (*Xuannan shi she* 宣南詩社), see *Ibid.*, 118; and McMahon, *Rethinking the Decline of China’s Qing Dynasty*, 135.
The period from the late Daoguang reign, through the Xianfeng (1850–1861) and Tongzhi (1861–1875) reigns saw a revival of statecraft studies in the face of the Nian Rebellion (1850–1868), Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860), and Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), and continued struggles with inadequate grain transport, tax arrears, inflation, and the underemployment of literate men. Early renewed interest in statecraft, especially in the provincial administration, was propelled by weakness in the central government during the Daoguang period. Ruan Yuan, quoted above, was one early participant in statecraft-inspired reform before his death in 1849. It is worth noting that this generation did not necessarily blame the Qing state for the problems it faced. In fact, they blamed challenges of foreign origin—commercial and military competition, the influx of opium, dependence on foreign silver—and remained loyal to the Qing empire. Understanding this complicated story of shifting scholarly and political priorities in this period is necessary before speculating why the Daoguang edition of *Wu bei zhi* differed so materially from its predecessors. In the Daoguang

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584 Jones and Kuhn, “Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion,” 119–132.
585 Hunan province, in particular, was a hub of such activity, with Hunanese officials such as Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1857), Yan Ruyi 顏如意 (1759–1826), and Tao Zhu 陶澍 (1779–1839), and officials from elsewhere working in Hunan, like Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785–1850), comprising much of the first generation of Daoguang-era statecraft aficionados. The energies of such men were directed at the first Opium War and internal debates about grain tribute and a corrupt tax system. *Ibid.*, 144–147; 149–156. See also McMahon, “Part 1 Transitions in Education and Ideology,” in Rethinking the Decline of China’s Qing Dynasty, 15–57.
586 Jones and Kuhn, “Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion,” 151, 154–155. The solutions proposed by Wei Yuan and others of this generation in response to these challenges were tied up in their commitment to New Text studies, a movement in classical studies in this period that, to an extent, rejected the pedantry of the empiricism of the Han scholasticism of the eighteenth century and revived a strict, moralistic interpretation of Song-dynasty neo-Confucian philosophy. It was within this moralistic interpretation that Ming loyalist heroes were once again celebrated for their loyalty. *Ibid.*, 151, 158.
editions, we see censorship of words unkind to the Qing, but *celebration* of the loyalty and initiative of Mao Yuanyi via the inclusion of his biography.

*Wu bei zhi* would hold a very different place in the minds of reformers who followed the Daoguang-period scholars of statecraft. The next generation of institutional reformers and military actors would inherit the moral commitments of the Daoguang generation as they faced a series of new crises, but would find *Wu bei zhi* unsuited to the technological demands of warfare in the second half of the nineteenth century. As the Qing empire faced military crises, one after another, in the 1850s and 1860s, and the successes of the central military were few and far between, the next generation of literati reformers gradually took control of regional armies. Men like Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811–1872), Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812–1885), and Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901) built armies personally loyal to themselves, and successfully put down the Taiping rebellion. However, these men saw that simultaneously the Qing army and their own regional forces were weak and technologically at a disadvantage compared with Western forces.\(^{587}\) In the 1860s and 1870s, they argued that the Qing empire must build armories and update the training of its forces. Thus was born the “self-strengthening movement” (*ziqiang* 自強 or *yangwu yundong* 洋務運動), which lasted through the 1890s.\(^{588}\) Self-strengthening advocates, like their predecessors, might have celebrated the loyalty of late-Ming patriots like Mao Yuanyi, but they had little patience for texts like *Wu bei zhi* that advocated the use of outdated techniques and technologies. Instead, the 1860s, 70s, and 80s saw a rise in advocacy of new technologies.


With the advent of the self-strengthening movement, *Wu bei zhi* was no longer worth reviving for its preservation of rare sources on Ming technology.

Benjamin Elman has argued that the period of the self-strengthening movement was a moment of intense and successful indigenous engagement with foreign technology and techniques, and dates the disruption of “the preeminent position of classical studies” to the period of self-strengthening after the Taiping Rebellion.\(^{589}\) Considerable progress was made with the adoption of Western military technologies, with, for example, the establishment of the Jiangnan Arsenal in Hangzhou where, *Shenbao* 申報 wrote in 1874, gunpowder was produced, but not that stuff recommended by the likes of *Wu bei zhi*.\(^{590}\) During this period, reformers energetically sought to remedy the discrepancy between Qing military power and Western military power shown so starkly with the French and British occupation of Beijing at the end of the Taiping Rebellion in 1864. The idea that the Qing had failed to adopt Western technologies would not take hold until after 1895. The familiar narrative of late-Qing weaknesses and failure to adopt Western technology (“the failure narrative”), Elman argues, was the product of domestic opinion in the wake of China’s defeats by foreign powers in the 1890s,\(^{591}\) specifically, Japan, whose late beginning led to the availability of naval technologies better than those already bought by the Qing. During the period of “self-strengthening,” *Wu bei zhi* was not reprinted, and would not be reprinted again until the last two decades of the Qing dynasty.

\(^{589}\) Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 279 and Part V.

\(^{590}\) “Hang Cheng sheju zhizao yaodan” 杭城設局製造藥彈 (Hangzhou City arsenal manufacture of gunpowder and ammunition), in *Shenbao* 申報, no. 806, 11 December 1874, 1–2. Another article argued that *Wu bei zhi* and a few other Ming military books were “useless” for training the new “people’s militias.” See “Lianmin tuan yi tong di kai shuo” 聯民團以同敵愾說 (Discourse on unifying the people’s militia against the enemy), in *Shenbao* 申報, no. 4242, 31 January 1885, 1–2.

\(^{591}\) Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, xxxvi; all of Part V.
The 1890s and 1900s: Dissolution and Pride

Recall that Mosca argues that the Jiaqing and Daoguang resurgence of Han confidence in statecraft and borderlands studies wasn’t “seen at the time in ethnic terms,” but the resurgence of Han literati’s confidence in discussing border affairs in the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods and the successes of the self-strengthening movement would set the stage for the revolutionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who would claim responsibility for “Greater China,” rebel against the Qing government, and reprint Wu bei zhi. Where the Jiaqing and Daoguang statecraft circles and the “self-strengthening” advocates of the mid-nineteenth century were Qing loyalists, many of those frustrated by Qing incompetence in the 1890s turned to anti-Manchu rhetoric and sought to reinvigorate the “Chinese” (Han) legacy they felt had been hampered by Qing rule.

As discussed in the section on extant copies of Wu bei zhi above, several woodblock print editions exist from the last two decades of the Qing dynasty. These editions should be considered in the context of late-Qing Han reformers and revolutionaries’ lamenting of “the feckless nature of Qing rule,” their impotence in the face of the loss of a naval war to Japan in 1895 and the European occupation of Beijing following the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century. The Qianlong-era prohibitions became a touchstone for such complaints, and Wu bei zhi was not left out. Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868–1936), exiled to Japan and known for anti-Manchu rhetoric,

594 Esherick, “How the Qing Became China,” 234.
595 Ibid., 233–235.
wrote the following passage in an essay titled “Grieving burned books, #58” (Ai fen shu di wushiba 哀焚書第五十八), first printed in 1900.596 While this passage is quite long, it is worth quoting at length for insight into Zhang Binglin’s understanding of the history of the Qing and how he felt Wu bei zhi and other similar books fit into this narrative of unjust rule. He argues that even though China proper had been invaded by other foreign peoples, they didn’t dare touch Chinese books. The Manchus, on the other hand, were a different story. He writes:

Upon reading the two volumes of Weiai shuji mulu (Catalogue of taboo books),

(The book is in two volumes, where the first includes the imperial edict and the latter the catalogue of books).

Zhang Binglin said: Alas! In the past the five barbarians, the Jin, and Yuan invaded China, their poison was heinous. [Yet] when it came to the distinction between thwarting and following, the distinction between what is and what is not, they didn’t dare get rid of the ancient texts to clear out traitorous talk. Since then, in the 39th year of his reign the Manchu emperor Qianlong opened the Imperial Library and sent down a decree seeking books, ordering that any taboo books encountered be destroyed. In the year Qianlong 41, the Grand Coordinator Haicheng responded by destroying more than 8,000 forbidden books. A notice praised the governance of his province. The destruction grew more hurried. From this point the flatterers swarmed. When the edict was first decreed, the misfortune fell upon the unofficial histories of the Ming dynasty.

596 On Zhang Binglin as a scholar and revolutionary, see Shimada, Pioneer of the Chinese Revolution, 3–23, in particular p. 17 on “Ai fen shu.” Esherick notes that later Japanese and Russian incursions in Korea and Manchuria in 1904 and 1905 would also be relevant to anti-Qing sentiment later in the decade. For our purposes here, note that Zhang wrote when the failed Hundred Days Reform of 1898 and the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) would have been top of mind.
Here, Zhang writes that the Manchus did dare to destroy Chinese books, and unscrupulous officials seeking advancement did so to get into the Qianlong emperor’s good graces. Zhang Binglin laments the Qianlong emperor’s decision to reward governors of provinces in the destruction of their own literary heritage. He then goes on to quote the order from Qianlong, and a comment from the Imperial Library explaining why these books were destroyed (seditious content), and emphasizes that late-Ming books like *Wu bei zhi* suffered especially:

(The order read: “The unofficial histories written at the end of the Ming are many. In the praise and blame, wanton rumor, and dissidence therein, there is inevitably language that slanders this dynasty. It is appropriate that in this investigation [We] exhaustively carry out their destruction, blocking fallacies in order to correct the hearts of men and cherish culture.”)

After this, the Imperial Library opined: “Although the people of the Song spoke of the Liao and Jin, and the people of the Yuan and Ming spoke of the Yuan, their comments were prejudiced in the extreme. These were all destroyed.” [This] included the memorials and writings of the generals, ministers, and worthy officials of the Ming dynasty after the Longqing reign (1567–72)…. Although Mao Yuanyi’s *Wu bei zhi* did not avoid the fires,

(Extant [copies of] *Wu bei zhi* are few due to [previous] denunciations, thus restrictions are looser now.)

The ellipses here elide the names of many authors and books. What we might note is who and what books, exactly, Zhang Binglin groups with Mao Yuanyi and *Wu bei zhi* in this list of the wronged dead from the late Ming. Zhang’s list of unjustly banned or censored authors reads as a list of who’s who of late-Ming patriots and martyrs of the mid-seventeenth century.

Table 8 contains a list of authors writing after the Longqing reign (1567–1572) but before what we now date as the end of the Ming (1644) who appear in Zhang’s piece. Names in this table will appear familiar from Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Aside from famous politicians of the late sixteenth century like Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582), many of the more prolific leaders of the military efforts against the Manchus in the 1620s and 1630s are listed, including Mao Yuanyi’s most important patrons, Sun Chengzong and Ye Xianggao. If the anger from exiles like Zhang Binglin stemmed from the “feckless” Qing government, then their frustrations were not dissimilar to those expressed by literati like Mao, Sun, and Ye at the end of the Ming. For Zhang, books were material reminders of the injustices they faced at the hands of a “foreign” government.

The details of the Qing government’s “feckless” nature ought to be understood in the context of China’s interaction with the nation states of the rest of the world, and the need for military competence in order to survive. Zhang Binglin’s work, quoted above, was produced right after the Boxer Rebellion, and defeat by Japan. In the 1860s, after the defeat of the

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Taipings, literati were frustrated that the British and French had encroached upon Beijing, but they weren’t to the point of rebelling. The cohort of literati discussed above who beat back the Taipings with provincial militias and an interest in Western technologies proved successful in quelling internal revolt, but clearly, for Zhang Binglin in the late 1890s, these successes were insufficient in the face of the Qing government’s new failures. Hostility to the foreign Qing government and the proliferation of woodblock print editions of *Wu bei zhi* from the last two decades of the Qing are evidence of the new desire to preserve Chinese technical prowess, however old or outdated.

A detailed discussion of late-Qing responses to the military humiliations of the 1890s and administrative collapse is impossible here, but it is important to note that one response was to use old forms of publication to produce new material responses to government inadequacies. Wang Hong has argued that the late Qing saw a resurgence in “worship” of military men—or at least an ideal of military men in response to the need for the Qing government to operate on equal footing with nation states that were militaristic societies. Operating on the assumption that China had a long history of “civil” rule, and neglected military strength, and relying on Yan Fu’s translation of Edward Jenks’s (1861–1939) *A History of Politics*, Yang Du (1875–1931), argues that China must turn to militarism in order to stand on even ground with the Japan and the nation states of Europe. Liang Qichao (1873–1929), another student exile in Japan, made similar arguments at the turn of the twentieth century. Advertisements for reprints of military books lamented contemporaries’ undervaluing of military men. Zhang Binglin even argued that military heroes (*xia* 俠) and military institutions were given short shrift by the

600 Wang Hong, “‘Zhuyi zhi jun’ de jueqi—jindai Zhongguo junren xingxiang de bianqian,” 88–89.
Confucian (ru 儒) tradition across previous centuries. We might think of the late-Qing reprints of Wu bei zhi, of which there are at least four editions, as part of this literary response to military weakness in a global context.

6.5 Observing the Material Object: Late-Qing Editions and their Readers

Anti-Manchu revolutionaries and reformers sought to reclaim vestiges of the last moment a Han state was militarily dominant, whether or not the technologies therein were useful. The history of Wu bei zhi’s printing in the late Qing supports the conclusion that these books gestured materially at the desire to resuscitate the heritage of statecraft in the late Ming. Traditionally, the study of editions has focused on pinpointing specific characteristics of individual copies of Wu bei zhi and identifying which systems of transmission they belong to. In the case of Chinese books, this means asking from which blocks were they printed, or which blocks were the basis for re-carving new blocks or setting the type of a new edition, when and where were they printed, who did the printing, and who paid for it. At the beginning of this chapter, I gave a brief summary of the status of such research into Wu bei zhi, specifically, summarizing which extant editions have been identified and current theories on their relationships to one another. In the case of late Qing copies of Wu bei zhi, sorting through these relationships is a dicey prospect, and definitive conclusions about who borrowed what blocks to print which editions are not always possible to achieve. However, in combination with notes on the material state of extant copies and readers’ marks, doing so allows us to consider two important questions regarding the status of Wu bei zhi as both epistemic and material object in the late Qing. Firstly, when did major changes in the physical appearance of copies of Wu bei zhi develop, and how do these

changes and the timing of their development support the hypothesis that *Wu bei zhi* was one material reflection of anti-Manchu revolutionary trends in the late Qing? Secondly, how did readers interact with physical copies of *Wu bei zhi* printed after the Daoguang period, and what does this tell us about *Wu bei zhi* as an epistemic object?

The first part of this last section addresses the first of those questions and argues that the hodgepodge combination of physical characteristics in late Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi*, drawn from multiple earlier editions, suggests widespread renewed interest in the reproduction of *Wu bei zhi*. The second part of this section argues that readers’ marks left in extant copies of late Qing editions simultaneously suggest that readers interacted with the *Wu bei zhi* quite differently than late-Ming or early-Qing readers, often attempting to read the book from beginning to end as thought it were a digestible narrative—one that readers rarely actually completed. The physical presence of the book was more important than reading the information in it.

### 6.5.1 Observing Late-Qing Editions of *Wu bei zhi*

Addressing what readers’ marks mean for how late-Qing readers encountered the book requires an initial analysis of how and why the late-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi* came to be. Unfortunately, while descriptions of specific late-Qing copies of *Wu bei zhi* abound, drawing conclusions about their relationships to one another based on their material legacy is difficult. Qiao Na identifies five woodblock editions printed in the late Qing: two printed in Hunan, one printed in Guangdong, a fourth simply identified as “late-Qing” (*Qing mo* 清末), and a fifth “Nankai late-Qing” edition held at Nankai University (unrelated). (For a comparison of these editions based on Qiao Na’s observations, see Table 7.) At the beginning of this chapter, I described Ming Sun Poon’s three “systems” of *Wu bei zhi* editions, where a “system” refers to a
lineage of editions based on a common earlier edition. Based on Qiao’s analysis, one thing we can deduce about the five late-Qing editions discussed here is that they do not all belong to one system, and Poon’s thesis doesn’t address the complexity of late-Qing re-printings of *Wu bei zhi*. 602

Qiao describes the characteristics of each of the five late-Qing editions as quite similar, with the exception of the one Hunan edition that clearly relies on the 1664 Japanese edition. This first Hunan edition retains the block carver’s name in the initial chapter, some of the Japanese reading marks, and some of the information from the publisher’s page at the end of the text. 603 The rest of the late-Qing editions are harder to distinguish from one another, but we shall make an attempt. Qiao Na argues that the “other Hunan” edition (*Hunan bie ben* 湖南别本), one copy held at Suzhou University, shares many similarities with those identified only as “late-Qing,” and is likely based on an edition printed after the Daoguang era. 604 The late-Qing Guangdong edition retains a pink flyleaf advertising the location of its sale, but is otherwise much like the Suzhou University Hunan copy. 605 Copies of the fourth edition, which I have been calling “late-Qing,” are held at three universities: Peking University, Academy of Military Sciences PLA

602 In fact, I am uncertain about the solidity of the “early-Qing/Daoguang” system Poon identifies. His schema relies on access to all four copies of *Wu bei zhi* held by the Library of Congress, one of which is the a 1664 Japanese edition, two of which he argues are Daoguang moveable type, and one of which he argues is an “early-Qing” edition. The online library catalog doesn’t record all four copies, and calls one a “moveable type edition” from 1621 (E701 M32), which doesn’t exist. The other is listed as a Qing woodblock print (E701 M32.1). Unfortunately, I was only able to view two copies: the Japanese copy, and the latter of these two copies (E701 M32.1), which I think is most likely a late-Qing print like those described by Qiao Na, not an “early-Qing” edition, or a Daoguang edition. I have yet to read a description of a copy that was, beyond doubt, an “early-Qing” edition. Library of Congress Catalog, accessed 11 July 2019, https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/searchBrowse.


604 Ibid., 20–21.

605 Ibid., 21.
China, and Minzu University of China. Qiao details the characteristics of the former two copies, and compares them to the fifth edition, “Nankai late-Qing,” held at Nankai University. Given the characteristics of the font used, Qiao identifies these as separate editions, but the “late-Qing” and “Nankai late-Qing” editions both differ from the Suzhou Hunan edition in their observance of Qing taboos. The text-only blocks in these late-Qing copies do not observe the same Qing name taboos as the Suzhou Hunan copy or the Guangdong edition—only their picture blocks do so.

Qiao Na thus demonstrates the “late-Qing” edition, “Nankai late-Qing” edition, “Hunan” edition, “Suzhou Hunan” edition, and “Guangdong” edition, differ minutely but importantly in font and block style, and in the presence of censored or taboo characters. Qiao further argues that the “Nankai late-Qing” and “late-Qing” copies held at Peking University and the Military Academy differ in the consistency of block style across a single copy. Qiao argues that the PKU and Military Academy copies were likely produced with a mix of blocks, in which the illustrated blocks were re-carved, as they broke more quickly than blocks of text alone.606 The text blocks were likely from the end of the Ming or early Qing. The block styles of the text and illustrated blocks differ within a single copy, and taboo characters for the emperors from Kangxi to Daoguang are only observed in illustrated blocks.607 Qiao does not speculate about the relationships between the Hunan editions, the “Nankai late-Qing” edition, the other “late-Qing” editions, and the Guangdong edition, other than to identify their minute differences, and predict that they were all carved and printed after the Daoguang era.

From Qiao’s work alone we can surmise that the relationships between late-Qing editions, regardless of the location of their printing, were complex. The copies of Wu bei zhi that

606 Ibid., 23.
607 Ibid., 23.
I have seen in Taiwan, the United States, and Canada support Qiao’s hypothesis regarding the re-carving of blocks in the late Qing as they wore out. However, there is more to this than simply replacing broken blocks: whole new sets were likely carved. The first appearance of the block style in which the block borders are single top and bottom and double on the left and right only appears in text-only blocks after the Daoguang period in various “late-Qing” editions (see, for example, Figure 8, an example from Princeton University’s late-Qing copy). This particular block style has not been observed in late-Ming or early-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi*. In fact, the first appearance of any kind of double-lined border in the blocks of the main text is in the Daoguang-era moveable type edition.608 This suggests that these were newly carved blocks. Whatever edition they might have been based on, the blocks themselves were likely re-carved after the Daoguang period.609 The presence of differing fonts and illustration styles observed by Qiao Na, some resembling the Ming edition, some not, shows that there were likely multiple sets of blocks re-carved after the Daoguang period, and further illustrated blocks were carved to supplement those lost. While we cannot determine the exact relationships between these editions, we can surmise that a great deal of time, money, and energy went into producing the woodblocks.

608 The only scholar to provide a detailed description of the early-Qing edition is Wang Lihua, who describes double borders on Mao Yuanyi’s preface, but nowhere else. Wang does not describe the border style of the main text blocks, and does not identify any Qing name taboos that the text avoids, but rather only identifies “prohibited” (wei’ai 違礙) characters, like “Eastern barbarians.” Columbia University’s copy of *Wu bei zhi* closely resembles Wang’s description of an “early-Qing” copy, but its illustrated blocks observe Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Daoguang name taboos. Wang’s description is based on a 1984 Taiwanese reprint of a copy of *Wu bei zhi*, and is compared to the reprint in *SKJH*, which is erroneously identified as a reprint of the 1621 edition. In the absence of a reliably described early-Qing copy of *Wu bei zhi*, I doubt it exists.

609 Double borders might also simply be more common in nineteenth-century printing. If so, this would also support the conclusion that these copies date to the second half of the nineteenth century.
for the various late-Qing editions, far more, arguably, than went into the original 1621 printing at Mao’s family firm, and with little attention to the potential for angering the Qing court.

The material leavings of *Wu bei zhi* are not a smoking gun identifying late-Qing anti-Manchu sentiment as a motivating factor for printers, publishers, and readers, but they do suggest a certain ambivalence toward rituals of homage. Reader comments from the period, like those of Zhang Binglin, point towards a general trend of lackadaisical adherence to such standards, confirming a general decrease in attention to censorship from the end of the Qianlong period forward.610 This laxity manifests in a number of ways. The consistency of censored characters and absence of post-Daoguang taboos imply that no-one bothered to further edit the blocks for late-Qing editions, but quickly printed many copies that approximately preserved their Daoguang format, heedless of offence given to the late-Qing emperors. In fact, the Hunan edition whose blocks were re-carved based on the seventeenth-century Japanese edition did not even bother censoring offensive language referring to the Manchus. Whatever blocks or copies were available for emulation were emulated. The one major change in the late Qing was the addition, when possible, of prefaces originally deleted for their anti-Manchu sentiments, and the deletion of Mao Yuanyi’s biography and *Mingshi* excerpts. An easy change to make, if publishers were relying on the Daoguang edition to carve blocks for late-Qing editions, they did not bother including the pieces of text that celebrated loyalty to a particular dynasty. The late-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi* might not overtly decry Manchu rule, but these material changes tally with documented increased interest in Han military accomplishments and irresolute attitudes to the Qing.

610 Widmer, “Modernization without Mechanization,” 64, 76.
6.5.2 Observing Vestiges of Late-Qing Readers

Above, I directed the reader to Table 6 for a list of copies of *Wu bei zhi* I have examined in North America and Taiwan. These copies support other scholars’ conclusions that Daoguang-era and later editions varied in quality, and the marginalia and punctuation found therein consistently suggest that late-Qing readers attempted to read the book as a single narrative rather than a reference book to be sampled. Xu Baolin, Wang Lihua, and Zhang Xinyi and Ding Li note differences between the paper used in two Daoguang editions, for example.\^611\footnotetext{Qiao Na, did not observe a copy of the Daoguang edition printed on “yellow” paper. Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi *Wu bei zhi* tanxi,” 22. See Wang Lihua, “*Wu bei zhi* si zhong Qing ban shulüe,” 72–73; Wang Lihua cites Xu Baolin 許保林, “*Wu bei zhi* banben kaolüe,” 89–97. She also cites Zhang Xinyi and Ding Li, “Kuayue shikong de wenming · Junshi pian,” 36–42.} Varying quality of paper and clarity of printed characters across Qing editions imply varying degrees of investment of time and money in print quality across time and space. If the material book in the late Qing implies changing motivations and limits of publishers in this period, then readers’ markings in copies of late-Qing and Daoguang editions likewise imply a changed way of interacting with the book.

The handwritten punctuation and marginalia I have observed in rare copies of *Wu bei zhi* suggest that readers did not read *Wu bei zhi* as a reference book, but rather as a narrative to be read from beginning to end. In Chapter 2 we considered *Wu bei zhi* as an encyclopedic reference work made of excerpts representing a common library of information on military studies. Keeping these definitions in mind, we might expect readers to punctuate only the excerpts they found relevant to their particular interests, excerpts they might have found by inspecting the tables of contents and flipping to the appropriate volume and chapter. We do see some evidence of this in rare copies of *Wu bei zhi* where readers have punctuated individual entries in their
entirety, each located seemingly at random throughout the text. However, the overwhelming majority of handwritten punctuation that appears in late-Qing copies of *Wu bei zhi* appears in the first 18 *juan* of each copy, the section on the military classics, *Bingjue ping*. It usually begins by quite diligently following the printed punctuation in the first *juan*, and gradually peters out, implying that the reader read from the beginning of the entire text, and gradually stopped punctuating as they found it less necessary to do so. In contrast, pre-Daoguang copies of *Wu bei zhi* have very little, if any, marginalia or handwritten punctuation. This phenomenon is not unique to *Wu bei zhi*, but comparing readers’ marks in pre-Daoguang copies and late-Qing copies of *Wu bei zhi* helps us describe the reasons behind it.\(^{612}\)

Out of the 11 copies of *Wu bei zhi* that I have personally examined in rare book collections, eight were reliably identified as Daoguang or later (see Table 6 for the relevant seven, Harvard-Yenching not included). Of those eight, five contained handwritten punctuation and marginalia. The two copies of the 1621 edition that I examined had no such markings, but only material evidence of attempts to preserve the book as it was originally printed.\(^{613}\)

\(^{612}\) In the military texts I have examined at the Princeton University Library and elsewhere, similar patterns of handwritten punctuation exist, especially for those books containing large chunks of prose. Readers were more likely to punctuate entire books that were not organized as encyclopedias, but rather contained long essays or retained a narrative sequence across the whole text. Compare with three books from The East Asian Library, Princeton University Library: Wan Biao 萬表, *Huang Ming jing ji wen lu* 皇明經濟文錄 (Record of texts on governing of the Glorious Ming) [China : Qu Rusheng 曲入繩, Ming Jianjing 33 nian i.e. 1554], Call no. TB72/616; Zheng Ruozeng 鄭若曾, collator; Zheng Yinglong 鄭應龍 and Zheng Yiluan 鄭一鸞, eds. *Chou hai tu bian* 筹海圖編 (Illustrated compilation for mapping the seas) [Hangzhou: Hu Zongxian, 1562], Call no. TB202/1404; and He Rubin 何汝賓, *Bing lu* 兵錄 (Record of the military) [Qing, between 1662 and 1735], Call no. TC33/1452.

\(^{613}\) For example, Princeton’s 1621 copy of *Wu bei zhi* contains many handwritten pages that painstakingly and accurately replace lost pages. I also found notes from Nancy Swann, an early curator of the Gest Collection,
Unfortunately, none of the late-Qing marginalia or punctuation is dated, but all is written in brush pen, implying that these markings date to somewhere between the Daoguang reign and the Republican period. One copy at Columbia University’s C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Rare Books and Special Collections contains the occasional handwritten marginal comment but no more. The four other post-Daoguang copies of \textit{Wu bei zhi} all contain quite a lot of handwritten punctuation that follows the printed, grammatical punctuation in \textit{Wu bei zhi} for several chapters, and sometimes also the emphasis marks. The Daoguang copy held at University of Washington best exemplifies this practice. In it, a reader has used a red brush pen to confirm the printed grammatical pauses throughout the first several \textit{juan}, but these marks become increasingly irregular throughout.

Other copies of late-Qing and Daoguang editions do the same with minor variations. For example, a copy of \textit{Wu bei zhi} held at the Library of Congress is also punctuated by hand. The volumes in the last case (volumes 76–80) contain no handwritten punctuation or comments, but some volumes in the first case are extensively marked up. The first through fourth \textit{juan} are punctuated with a red ink, following the printed punctuation. Instead of merely punctuating grammatical pauses, this reader also re-emphasizes many of the printed emphasis marks. This handwritten punctuation ends midway through \textit{juan} 5. Occasional handwritten marginal

\footnote{Mao Yuanyi, \textit{Wu bei zhi} 武備志, China: s.n., Qing i.e. between 1736 and 1912, 80 volumes in 10 cases, held by C.V. Starr East Asian Library, Chinese Rare Books and Special Collections, Columbia University Libraries, Call No. RAREBOOK 8917 4212.}

\footnote{Mao Yuanyi, \textit{Wu bei zhi} 武備志, Place and date of publication note identified, East Asia Library Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, call no. U43.C6 M36v.
comments appear through the next few volumes, but no further handwritten punctuation appears until juan 14. As I was not able to examine any but the first and last cases of this copy, I cannot say whether punctuation appears in the middle of the text, but I can say that the punctuation in Bingjue ping follows the same pattern as in other late-Qing copies. It appears the reader began reading at the beginning of the book and then discontinued midway through Juan 5. Similarly, a copy held at National Taiwan Library (Guoli Taiwan tushuguan 國立台灣圖書館), contains handwritten punctuation confirming the punctuation in the first few volumes, which peters out. However, it appears that this reader (or another), upon giving up reading straight through, flipped to a topic that interested him or her. From juan 57 through juan 148, no handwritten punctuation or marginalia exists, but occasional passages are then punctuated in full through the end of the text. Interestingly, juan 185 through 211 contain numerous maps (this is the section on geography), most of which are hand-painted in color. This seems to indicate that the reader at

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616 The Library of Congress online catalog entry identifies the particular copy I saw as follows: Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi: er bai si shi juan 武備志：二百四十卷, [China : s.n. ; not before 1644], Library of Congress, Asian Division, Call no. E701.M32.1, or Call no. G2306.R5, http://lccn.loc.gov/2004633695. There is another copy of the same, E701.M32.2, which I examined on microfilm. Given the characteristics of the blocks and contents, these appear to be the two Daoguang copies Ming Sun Poon identifies. I was verbally told that the copy I examined was the LOC 1621 copy, which was not the case. I was permitted to examine the LOC Japanese, 1664 copy, but no other Chinese copies. Poon’s conclusion is likely based on the inclusion of the Mingshi and biography of Mao Yuanyi at the beginning of the Microfilm copy I examined. However, I disagree that the copy I examined physically is a Daoguang copy. It contains no biography of Mao, and there are no lines printed underneath the page numbers in the spine of the blocks. This copy, E701.M32.1, is likely a late-Qing print. See Table 6.

617 These maps are frustrating in that they raise far more questions than they answer. I’ve never encountered another book of maps painted this way, and the reader left no indication of why they did so. There does not appear to be any value added by the colors beyond aesthetic. The National Taiwan Library digital catalog records this item as: Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi: er bai si shi juan 武備志：二百四十卷, China: s.n. Ming Tianqi yuan nian xu ke ben 明天啟元年序刻本, i.e. preaced and printed in 1621, National Taiwan Library (Guoli Taiwan tushuguan 國立台灣
some point read the book from the beginning, then began to skip around in the text, and found the “Geography” section particularly valuable. Other readers, like the one who marked up the Daoguang copy held by National Taiwan University Rare Books and Special Collections, chose to not only confirm existing punctuation, but also correct mistaken punctuation (some is crossed out, some added). Handwritten characters correct variant characters, and some comments revise prohibited language or comment on it. Such corrective markings are found throughout, but appear in higher concentrations in the Bingjue ping chapters and those like 223 and 228 with more censored material.\(^6\) In all of these books, readers tended to use red ink to punctuate and write comments, though black ink sometimes appears too.

From these four examples, it is difficult to surmise what readers’ reactions to the specific content of the book were, but we can speculate about how they physically interacted with the book. Readers generally started at the beginning of the text, appearing to read most of the Seven Military Classics in order, and confirming punctuation along the way. Readers might then flip between particular sections that interested them, presumably with the help of the table of contents as a finding tool. Aside from the beginning few chapters, the most often marked sections tended to be those in the section on the “Four Barbarians” where censorship of language relating to the Manchus was to be found. Readers might disagree with the printed punctuation, or

\(^6\) NTU Library records the following in their digital catalog: Mao Yuanyi, *Wu bei zhi: er bai si shi juan* 武備志：二百四十卷, Ming Tianqi yuanian kan ben 明天啟辛酉（元年）刊本, i.e. published in 1621, Finding no. (Suoshuhao 索書號) 中善 0615 302007. https://ntu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991014992339704786&context=L&vid=886NTU_INST:886NTU_INST&search_scope=MyInstitution&isFrbr=true&tab=LibraryCatalog&lang=zh-tw. This is unlikely a 1621 edition. See Table 6.
find “incorrect” characters and replace them with handwritten characters. Marginalia, in the strict sense of handwritten marginal commentary, is sparse, and most often refers to incomplete, censored, or damaged characters in the main text. Readers’ special attention to later chapters like the “Four Barbarians,” or maps throughout the “Geography” section suggest that they valued the parts of *Wu bei zhi* that preserved sources otherwise inaccessible. Late-Qing readers appear to agree that it is things like the preserved maps of Zheng He’s voyages that gave *Wu bei zhi* “historical value,” those things that, unlike the *Seven Military Classics*, are unique to *Wu bei zhi*. For late-Qing readers, both the material and the epistemic object *Wu bei zhi* were quite different than for late-Ming and early-Qing readers. Rather than a holistic library of information that embodied a particular notion of expertise and served a function for active officials, it was now a mausoleum of obsolete information to be preserved and cherished for its historical value.

### 6.6 Conclusion

Residual markings from readers in surviving late-Qing copies of *Wu bei zhi* do not comment quite so directly on the inherent value of *Wu bei zhi* as an object as do the writings of someone like Zhang Binglin, who explicitly wrote for an audience. However, we can understand readers’ marks as indications of those things to which readers paid attention, or where they at least began their journeys through the 240 chapters of *Wu bei zhi*. I can attest that the book hardly has a captivating narrative when read from beginning to end. I began this chapter with the question of what is unique to *Wu bei zhi*, and why it holds such attraction to so many modern scholars. Modern scholars are as guilty as late-Qing literati of reading *Wu bei zhi* as a means to a historiographical end. Many scholars primarily value *Wu bei zhi* as a historically situated record of technological achievement, strategic thought, and contemporary practices—even ethnic
differences. However, it is not the content of *Wu bei zhi* that is new or inherently interesting, but its simultaneous singularity and multiplicity across time, and what the scale of the book means for its multiplicity.

The material object *Wu bei zhi* of the Daoguang period is quite a different thing from the object of 1621, and the late-Qing editions are different again. Its instantiations in Japan and the erasure of its author in Europe transform it even further. In the late Ming, *Wu bei zhi* was a reference book compiling the most important and best textual information about military studies available. By the late Qing, readers’ descriptions of the book had changed, and so, too, had the way they interacted with it. Late-Qing readers could not be expected to think that the firearms depicted in *Wu bei zhi* were of tactical importance, or that the maps so carefully colored in the National Taiwan Library copy were still accurate and useful for military purposes. From the late Ming through the Daoguang period, the author-as-object was inseparable from the book-as-object, but in the late Qing, when the idea of the loyal author was no longer appealing, the author’s strident rhetoric about loyalty to the state was largely ignored, and instead the book was reprinted as a monument to Han accomplishments.

This chapter has traced these differences, but it has also traced a singular object bound by a name, and its author, also bound by a name. Examining the material and intertextual traces of *Wu bei zhi* as both material and epistemic object forces us to grapple with this singularity and multiplicity, and shows us how very different it was to interact with a military “encyclopedia” in the late Ming and the late Qing. In the late Ming, *Wu bei zhi* was proof of the textual expertise and the loyalty of an individual author-object. In the late Qing, it was material proof of the collective possession of historical agency, expertise and superiority.
Table 6. North American and Taiwanese copies of *Wu bei zhi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copy and library</th>
<th>Catalog date</th>
<th>Title page etc.</th>
<th>Prefaces (number and block style)</th>
<th>Preface censorship</th>
<th>Text block style</th>
<th>Picture block style</th>
<th>Main text, censorship</th>
<th>Main text, taboos</th>
<th>Eyebrow comment format</th>
<th>Hypothesis vs. catalog</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Princeton University East Asian Library, Gest Collection. Call no. TC-33 1368. Accessed June 2015 and May 2017.</td>
<td>Printed in 1621.</td>
<td>No title page; <em>juan</em> 1 page 1 has the name of the block carver.</td>
<td>Mao Yuanyi’s preface (自序); single borders on 4 sides, no column borders, no fishtail. Other contents: <em>Fanli</em> 凡例, <em>zongmu</em> 總目, and <em>juanmu</em> 卷目.</td>
<td>None in Mao’s preface, but other prefaces appear to have been removed after printing.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 side, no fishtail.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders.</td>
<td>Agreed that this is a copy of the 1621 original edition.</td>
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<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date etc.</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
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<td>Princeton University East Asian Library, Gest Collection. Call no. TC 33 4046. Accessed June 2015.</td>
<td>Catalog dates to “Qing, i.e. between 1736 and 1820.” And, “likely post Qianlong.”</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “Wu bei zhi er bai si shi juan” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Mao Yuanyi’s preface (自序); double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail. Other contents: Fanli 凡例, zongmu 總目, and juanmu 卷目.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈. No prefaces besides Mao’s.</td>
<td>Some blocks with top/bottom single and left/right double borders, no fishtail; some blocks with single borders on 4 sides, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail.</td>
<td>女真, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐, 女直奴酋, 殲夷, 女直考, etc. are carved out; empty boxes take their place. Missing much of juan 228.</td>
<td>Textual blocks do not appear to observe Kangxi taboos (eg. 玄, juan 228, 4b, is whole). Illustrated blocks likely do, but I was unable to confirm.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders. Closely matches the late-Qing editions from Qiao Na; likely printed after 1820. Lacks features of Daoguang editions like double lines underneath page numbers and biography materials at the beginning of the text. For features of Daoguang editions, see Qiao Na, page 22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Catalog date</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia University, C.V. Starr East Asian Library. Call no. 8917 4212</td>
<td>Qing, i.e. between 1736 and 1912.</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “Wu bei zhi erhai si shi juan” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Prefaces: Fu 傅, Lang 朗, Gu 頤, Zhang 張, Song 宋, Mao 茅; Format: Single borders on 4 sides, sometimes with left/right double borders, no fishtail, no column borders. Prefaces: A second copy of Mao’s preface, double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail, column borders.</td>
<td>Lacks the Li Weizhen preface. In Lang Wenhuan: 「東夷小丑 」became 「域中小丑」; in Zhang Shiyi「建夷匪茹」 becomes 「邊陲告警」; in the first copy of Mao’s preface, 東夷 becomes 兵戈, in the second, it becomes 干戈.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides; no fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 3 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>Empty boxes take the place of forbidden characters. Juan 177, page 7b: 宮一七四; 挨次數; 不差耳; all censored. Same page Line 7, character 1is 遇, usually it is a 餘. Otherwise, similar to the above. Missing much of juan 228.</td>
<td>The text blocks do not avoid Kangxi taboos, but the picture blocks avoid Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Daoguang names.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders.</td>
<td>This is likely correctly identified as late-Qing. It is unlikely a Daoguang moveable type copy, as it is missing key features (lines under the page numbers in the spine, and Mingshi and biography excerpts), and it is made from a hodgepodge of blocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library of Congress</td>
<td>“Not before 1644.”</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “Wu bei zhi er bai si shi juan” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Mao Yuanyi preface. No further paratexts. Block style: double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides, sometimes left/right double border; no fishtail.</td>
<td>Unknow n.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐, 女直奴酋, 剌夷, 女直考, etc. are carved out; empty boxes take their place. Missing much of juan 228.</td>
<td>Unknow n.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders.</td>
<td>Likely one of the copies Ming Sun Poon identifies as a Daoguang copy. However, it has no biography of Mao or excerpt from the Mingshi. It also lacks the Daoguang characteristic of lines drawn under the page numbers. More likely a late-Qing copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
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<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date etc.</td>
<td>Title page</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
<td>Main text, taboos</td>
<td>Eyebrow comment format</td>
<td>Hypothesis vs. catalog</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Washingto n, East Asian Library Special Collections</td>
<td>“[Place and date of publication not identified.]”</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “Wu bei zhi er hui si shi juan” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Mao’s preface (自序), excerpt from Mingshi, and bio of Mao. Single borders on all sides; single fishtail; column borders. Lines below page numbers.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>Same as text blocks. Single borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>Similar to above.</td>
<td>Unknown.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. Black borders surroundin g the text.</td>
<td>Likely the Daoguang edition because of lines underneath page numbers and inclusion of extra materials at the front.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date etc.</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
<td>Main text, taboos</td>
<td>Eyebrow comment format</td>
<td>Hypothesis vs. catalog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academia Sinica, Fu Ssu-nien Memorial Library</td>
<td>“Ming Tianqi yuannian (1621) kanben” 明天啟元年刊本</td>
<td>No title page; <em>juan</em> 1 page 1 has the name of the block carver.</td>
<td>All prefaces: Li 李, Gu 顧, Zhang 張, Lang 郎, Fu 傅, Song 宋, and Mao (自序). single borders on 4 sides, no column borders, no fishtail. Other contents: <em>Fanli</em> 凡例, <em>zongmu</em> 總目, and <em>juanmu</em> 卷目.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides, no fishtail.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders.</td>
<td>Agreed that this is a copy of the 1621 original edition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy and library</td>
<td>Catalog date</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
<td>Main text, taboos</td>
<td>Eyebrow comment format</td>
<td>Hypothesis vs. catalog</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Taiwan Library, Taiwan Study Research Center</td>
<td>China: s.n. <em>Ming Tianqi yuannian xu ke ben</em> 明天啟元年序刻本, i.e. preaced and printed in 1621.</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “<em>Wu bei zhi er bai si shi juan</em>” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Unknown.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈</td>
<td>Single borders top and bottom, sometimes double left and right; no fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>Empty boxes in place of 女直 etc.</td>
<td>Unknown n.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high. No borders.</td>
<td>Likely a late-Qing copy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Taiwan University Library Special Collections</td>
<td>Ming Tianqi yuannian kan ben 明天啟辛酉（元年）刊本, i.e. published in 1621.</td>
<td>Title page printed in seal script, “<em>Wu bei zhi er bai si shi juan</em>” 武備志二百四十卷.</td>
<td>Mao’s preface (自序), excerpt from <em>Mingshi</em>, and bio of Mao.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈</td>
<td>Single borders on all sides; single fishtail; lines below page numbers.</td>
<td>Single borders on all sides; single fishtail; lines below page numbers.</td>
<td>Empty boxes replace 女直 etc.</td>
<td>Unknown n.</td>
<td>Two columns per column of main text, no borders, max three characters high.</td>
<td>Likely a Daoguang copy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Characteristics of Qiao Na’s late-Qing editions of *Wu bei zhi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edition/Copy</th>
<th>Title page etc.</th>
<th>Prefaces (number and block style)</th>
<th>Preface censorship</th>
<th>Text block style</th>
<th>Picture block style</th>
<th>Main text, censorship</th>
<th>Main text, taboos</th>
<th>Eyebrow comment format</th>
<th>Qiao’s hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunan “Other” Edition, Suzhou University</td>
<td>Has the block carver’s name on page 1 of <em>juan</em> 1; is labeled with “Hunan.”</td>
<td>Mao’s preface only; double borders on 4 sides; column borders; single fishtail.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈.</td>
<td>Single borders top and bottom, double borders left and right, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐 are carved out.</td>
<td>Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang emperors.</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>復刻 based on Daoguang edition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunan Edition, at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (中科院).</td>
<td>Has block carver’s name, and Japanese publication info in the last volume; Japanese punctuation in some parts.</td>
<td>Six prefaces and Mao’s preface; single borders on 4 sides; no fishtail.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Single borders on 4 sides; no fishtail.</td>
<td>Same</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Has a black outline around eyebrow comments.</td>
<td>Based on the Japanese 1664 edition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edition/Copy</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
<td>Main text, taboos</td>
<td>Eyebrow comment format</td>
<td>Qiao’s hypothesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guangdong Edition, Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
<td>One page devoted to book seller’s information at the front of the book. No carver name.</td>
<td>5 prefaces and Mao’s preface; 5 guest prefaces are single bordered; no column borders; no fishtail. Mao’s preface is double bordered, with column borders, and a single fishtail.</td>
<td>Missing Li Weizhen’s preface.</td>
<td>Some blocks with top/bottom single and left/right double borders, no fishtail; some blocks with double borders on 4 sides, single fishtail.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐 are carved out.</td>
<td>Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang emperors.</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Most closely related to Suzhou University edition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-Qing at Nankai University</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mao’s preface only; double borders on 4 sides; column dividers.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 干戈.</td>
<td>Double borders on 4 sides; single fishtail.</td>
<td>Same as text.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐 are carved out.</td>
<td>Picture blocks only: Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang emperors.</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Probably printed during or after the Daoguang era.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edition/Copy</td>
<td>Title page etc.</td>
<td>Prefaces (number and block style)</td>
<td>Preface censorship</td>
<td>Text block style</td>
<td>Picture block style</td>
<td>Main text, censorship</td>
<td>Main text, taboos</td>
<td>Eyebrow comment format</td>
<td>Qiao’s hypothesis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Qing at Peking University</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mao’s preface only; double borders on 4 sides; column dividers.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 幹戈.</td>
<td>Primarily single borders on 4 sides, with sometimes left/right double borders, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Mostly double borders on 4 sides with sometimes left/right double; single fishtail.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐 are carved out.</td>
<td>Only the picture blocks: Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang emperors.</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Printed based on a late-Ming or early Qing edition, but not the original. Based on character style, likely, the three “Late-Qing” copies are copied from the same original, and so are at least of the same “system.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Qing at Academy of Military Sciences</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Mao’s preface only; double borders on 4 sides; column dividers.</td>
<td>東胡 becomes 幹戈.</td>
<td>Primarily left/right double borders with sometimes single borders on 4 sides, no fishtail.</td>
<td>Mostly double borders on 4 sides with sometimes left/right double; single fishtail.</td>
<td>女直, 奴兒干, and 建州毛憐 are carved out.</td>
<td>Only the picture blocks: Kangxi, Qianlong, Jiaqing, Qianlong, and Daoguang emperors.</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>See PKU.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Books Banned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gao Gong 高拱 (1510–1578)</td>
<td><em>Bian lüe</em> 邊略 (Outline of the borderlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582)</td>
<td><em>Tai yue ji</em> 太岳集 (Collected writings of Taiyue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen Shixing 申時行 (1535–1614)</td>
<td><em>Lunfei jianju</em> 輪扉簡牘 (Writings from the Hanlin Academy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ye Xianggao 葉向高 (1559–1627)</td>
<td><em>Si yi kao</em> 四夷考 (Study of the four barbarians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Qu bian</em> 蘊編 (Collection of pleasant surprise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cangxia cao</em> 蒼霞草 (Scribbles from Cangxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cangxia yu cao</em> 蒼霞餘草 (More scribbles from Cangxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cangxia xu cao</em> 蒼霞續草 (Continued scribbles from Cangxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cangxia zou cao</em> 蒼霞奏草 (Memorials and scribbles from Cangxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cangxia chidu</em> 蒼霞尺牘 (Correspondence from Cangxia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562–1626)</td>
<td><em>Gaozi yi shu</em> 高子遺書 (Posthumous writings of Gaozi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zou Yuanbiao 鄒元標 (1551–1624)</td>
<td><em>Zou Zhongjie zoushu</em> 鄒忠介奏疏 (Memorials of Zou Zhongjie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Lian 楊漣 (1572–1625)</td>
<td><em>Yang Zhonglie wenji</em> 楊忠烈文集 (Collected writings of Yang Zhonglie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuo Guangdou 左光鬥 (1575–1625)</td>
<td><em>Zuo Zhongyi ji</em> 左忠毅集 (Collected writings of Zuo Zhongyi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miao Changqi 繆昌期 (1562–1626)</td>
<td><em>Congye tang cun gao</em> 從野堂存稿 (Preserved drafts from the Congye Hall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiong Tingbi 熊廷弼 (1569–1625)</td>
<td><em>An Liao shugao</em> 按遼疏稿 (Drafts of memorials on pacifying Liao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Shudu</em> 書牘 (Correspondence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Xiong Zhigang shigao</em> 熊芝岡詩稿 (Collected poetry of Xiong Zhigang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Chengzong 孫承宗 (1563–1638)</td>
<td><em>Sun Gaoyang ji</em> 孫高陽集 (Collected writings of Sun Gaoyang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Books Banned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593–1644) | *Ni Wenzheng yi gao* 倪文正遺稿  
(Posthumous writings of Ni Wenzheng)  
*Zoudu* 奏��  
(Memorials) |
| Lu Xiangsheng 盧象升 (1600–1638) | *Xuanyun zouyi* 宣雲奏議  
(Memorials of Xuanyun) |
| Sun Chuanting 孫傳庭 (1593–1643) | *Xing zui lu* 省罪錄  
(Record of reflecting on wrongdoings) |
| Yao Ximeng 姚希孟 (1579–1636)   | *Qingbi quan ji* 清閟全集  
(Complete writings of Qingbi)  
*Hangxie ji* 湮澀集  
(The evening mist collection)  
*Wen yuan ji* 文遠集  
(Keeping distance from the literary collection)  
*Gonghuai ji* 公槐集  
(Collection of the three preceptors) |
| Ma Shiqi 马世奇 (d. 1644)       | *Danning ju ji* 淡寧居集 (Collection from Danning Abode) |
Figure 8. Mao Yuanyi’s preface to *Wu bei zhi* with double borders.

This copy is Princeton University’s Daoguang-period copy of *Wu bei zhi*. Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀, *Wu bei zhi* 武備志 China: s.n., Qing, i.e. between 1736 and 1820, call no. TC33/4046. The “fishtail” is the triangular, black shape on the left inside the “heart” or “spine” of the block. *(Courtesy of the East Asian Library, Princeton University Library.)*
Chapter 7: Conclusion

This dissertation has described practices of information excerption, ordering, citation, and punctuation found in *Wu bei zhi* and the social practices of the compiler that built up *Wu bei zhi* and its compiler’s dividual identity. Practices expose the multiplicity of *Wu bei zhi* and its compiler as objects. The dissertation then argues that these practices were common to an emerging genre of encyclopedic text dealing with topics under the aegis of statecraft and concrete studies in the late Ming. Lastly, Chapter 6 described how objects like *Wu bei zhi* and Mao Yuanyi are mutually constituted and change across time according to readers’ historical context and interpretive practices.

In Chapter 6, we saw that writers referenced *Wu bei zhi* in the late nineteenth century as “useless” for producing the latest and greatest versions of gunpowder and firearms needed in the new Jiangnan Arsenal. In the late Qing, readers were no longer trying to bolster a state with the latest expertise available; what mattered was the scale of the Ming-dynasty, Han object *Wu bei zhi* and what it symbolized. Zhang Binglin did not care that *Wu bei zhi*’s muskets and cannons were useless; he cared that *Wu bei zhi* was a momentous Han achievement that had been erased. In the high Qing, during the Qianlong reign period, *Wu bei zhi* was nothing more than yet another sloppy, late-Ming compilation. These readers, like modern readers, operated outside the context of late-Ming production and consumption practices and struggled to appreciate *Wu bei zhi* on its own terms. By studying practices in and surrounding *Wu bei zhi*, this dissertation strives to remedy this problem.

Citation, social, punctuation and reading practices for technical works in the late Ming built *Wu bei zhi* into a demonstration of technical, textual expertise, and turned its compiler into
an expert. The encyclopedic practices we observe elsewhere in Ming daily use encyclopedias, drama miscellany, and even novels, were mobilized in *Wu bei zhi* with precision and to different purposes. However, late-Ming, encyclopedic practices in the fields of statecraft studies and concrete studies were not appreciated in later instantiations of the book as printers changed the material object and readers newly interpreted the epistemic object. As readers and publishers changed practices to fit the context of their times, *Wu bei zhi* itself became a different entity, and so too did Mao Yuanyi. The task of the modern reader is to differentiate between the *Wu bei zhi* she perceives, and that which its compiler and late-Ming readers perceived and produced.

He Yuming has argued that Qing scholars, especially those who compiled the *Siku quanshu*, failed to appreciate Ming reading and compilation practices on their terms. Texts that “destabilized hierarchies of genre and style,” like drama miscellanies, were critiqued for their “hucksterish” style of book consumption and production, where copying and “sloppy” citation reigned supreme.619 As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, He Yuming argues that these “modes of consumption” and “the mechanisms of use and meaning-generation” of the Ming demanded that readers demonstrate considerable facility navigating a complicated “bibliographical terrain.”620 Scholars like He Yuming and Shang Wei grapple with the practices of text production and consumption dealt with in this dissertation, but they deal with genres of pre-modern Chinese literature less concerned with justifying truth claims than *Wu bei zhi* and other statecraft compendia. Where He and Shang’s objects of study “destabilize hierarchies of genre and style,” *Wu bei zhi* seeks to stabilize those hierarchies of information ordering that make its contents legible and substantiate its claims of reliability, comprehensiveness, and utility.

620 Ibid., 7–8, 20.
The late-Ming “hucksterish” practices so lamented by Qing scholars could both destabilize and stabilize so long as compilers and readers were part of the same interpretive community and had access to similar libraries of information and reading practices. “Hucksterism” was integral to epistemic practices of late-Ming statecraft and concrete studies.

Modern readers are, like Qing scholars, likely to dismiss editorial practices in *Wu bei zhi* that actually bring a framework of expert knowledge to life. Like He Yuming used “hucksterism” as an analytical anchor, our own ignorance and distance from the Ming can be useful. Upon beginning this dissertation, I quickly found that identifying the late-Ming *Wu bei zhi* was an exercise in mapping my own ignorance. To a reader who did not grow up having memorized Chinese military texts, hearing stories of epic battles between Warring States and fledgling empires, warlords and virtuous kings in history class, or reading *Sanguo yanyi* (Romance of the three kingdoms) comics, or watching movies about the battle of Chibi (Red Cliff), much of what Mao Yuanyi has to say in *Wu bei zhi* is utter gibberish at first reading. Despite having spent many hours practicing parsing literary Chinese grammar, a late-Ming text like *Wu bei zhi* poses a particular challenge for readers like me. When this project began, I knew who Jiang Ziya 姜子牙 was, but a reference to Taigong 太公 meant little. I knew enough to say that when one speaks of Cao Cao 曹操, Cao Cao shows up (說曹操曹操就到), but a passing mention of Mengde 孟德 could have been a reference to anyone. These difficulties are not

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621 Jiang Ziya, originally named Lü Shang 呂尚, was a strategist at the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771BC), enfeoffed at Qi, and posthumously known as the Grand Duke of Qi (齊太公). Like many historical figures of equal stature, he is known by a number of names. In Mao’s text he is often referred to as just “Tai Gong.” Purportedly the author of one of the Seven Military Classics, see below. Cao Cao is well known as the leader of the State of Wei (220–265 AD) after the fall of the Eastern Han, and often portrayed as the antagonist to the hero Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, in both historical circumstance and in the Ming novel *Sanguo yanyi*
news to any historian of China who did not grow up with these stories as the meat and potatoes of both history class and extracurricular experiences (or, in my case, came to an appreciation of martial arts novels rather later than their appreciation of books on military technology and medicine). If this paragraph reads like gibberish to you, then you have some idea of what it is like to approach a seventeenth-century military encyclopedia like *Wu bei zhi* as both an outsider to the community of readers that made it, and an outsider to the modern nation state that claims that community as its heritage.

Here, I have attempted to use my own experiences of alienation while reading *Wu bei zhi* to identify the general shape of the library of information exploited by literati military experts of the late Ming without imposing my own expectations. In Chinese history and other disciplines dealing with pre-modern Chinese texts, it is not customary to admit to textual insecurity. Yet I have found that consciously exploiting my own sense that I do not belong allowed me to see things I otherwise took for granted. For some readers, pieces of this dissertation might seem like a reiteration of the obvious. I argue that the obvious reveals textual and social practices of seventeenth-century China that are important to describe as part of the changing epistemological assumptions of the seventeenth-century. To reiterate my conviction from the introduction: the framework of expert knowledge revealed in *Wu bei zhi* must be approached through the mapping of editorial, social, and reading practices generally left unexamined precisely because they were (and are still) considered obvious.

One problematique left relatively unexplored in these chapters, but that editorial and social practices surrounding *Wu bei zhi* and similar books reveals, is that between *wen* (the civil)

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三國演義. The saying, “When one speaks of Cao Cao, Cao Cao shows up,” is a rough equivalent of the English idiom “Speak of the devil!” Mengde is his style name.
and *wu* (the martial) in Chinese society in this period. This dissertation could have been about the convergance of *wen* and *wu* in the late Ming, about which there is considerable, excellent work that asks whether the rhetorical differences we observe actually led to social stratification between those who practiced *wen* and those who practiced *wu*.\(^\text{622}\) It was long held that *wen* and *wu* were “obviously” oppositional, and that Chinese gentry were very much on the side of *wen*. Clearly, Mao Yuanyi felt this tension keenly, given family and social expectations that he perform as a literatus successful in the civil examinations. It is telling that, in the letters analyzed in Chapter 3, Mao Yuanyi often laments his failure to live up to the standards of his family in the civil examinations, even as he advertises his expertise in military policy. Likewise, in Chapter 5, we saw the late-Ming military examination graduate, Wang Minghe, carefully acknowledging the difference between his own status and those of graduates of the civil examinations. Succeeding in the military examinations does not appear to have been an option that would satisfy the social criteria of Mao Yuanyi’s class. Wang Minghe could be a military expert, but nothing else; Mao could be an expert in military affairs, but not at the expense of classical literacy and its concomitant skills—poetry composition, essay composition, policy studies, etc. However, Mao’s life and oeuvre also clearly demonstrate that *wen* and *wu* were not oppositional in this period, and, in fact, were codependent in the demonstration of military expertise. This dissertation has not focused on the *wen/wu* binary because it is less central to understanding the episteme of late-Mingencyclopedism than the practices that were common across statecraft and concrete studies compendia.

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\(^{622}\) See, for example, Ryor, “*Wen* and *Wu* in Elite Cultural Practice during the Late Ming,” 219–242; and all of the work in *Military Culture in Imperial China*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo.
There exist a number of additional avenues for further research on *Wu bei zhi* that would help supplement a study of *Wu bei zhi* as an individual book, but could not be pursued here. In addition to studying the tension between *wen* and *wu* more specifically, more in-depth dissections of Mao Yuanyi’s social network and its members would shed light on relationships between facets of Ming literati life that are often studied separately, in part due to the *wen* and *wu* binary. For example, a holistic picture of Mao’s life would necessarily include poetry written to friends and family, both those who were with him in Sun Chengzong’s retinue, and those who stayed behind. It would necessarily include an analysis of his relationships with the many brilliant women who populated his life and clearly enriched it in Nanjing and in the Northeast, if his poetry is to be believed.\(^\text{623}\) The role of factionalism in Mao’s political life and his connections with the Donglin Faction, in particular, could also be explored in depth. Lastly, my experience with personally examining rare copies of *Wu bei zhi* bolsters my conviction that historians would benefit from standardized methods of descriptive bibliography for Chinese rare texts, a conviction formed by participation in a workshop organized by Devin Fitzgerald in summer 2017 on this topic.\(^\text{624}\)

For studies of the material objects titled *Wu bei zhi*, one or more scholars would need to work collaboratively to compare the appearances of copies of the text in Mainland China, Taiwan, Canada, the United States, and Japan. The absence of sufficiently detailed standards of descriptive bibliography for scholarship in English on Chinese rare books poses challenges for

\(^\text{623}\) Mao was married to two of the most prolific and well respected female poets of the late Ming, Yang Wan and Wang Wei. On these women’s writings and lives, including their marriages to Mao Yuanyi, see Sufeng Xu, “青泥蓮花 Lotus Flowers Rising from the Dark Mud,” Chapter 3, 171–255.

those of us writing in English. The plurality of available copies of Wu bei zhi combined with limited funds and differing policies regarding access and photography in these countries also renders accurate comparisons of similar objects difficult. Many libraries lack the funds and staff to accurately identify what sort of copy of Wu bei zhi they hold.

Aside from these limitations, as discussed in the introduction and at the beginning of Chapter 6, scholarship in Mainland China and North America and Europe tends to participate in very different conversations. If, as I argued in Chapter 6, Zhang Binglin and other late-Qing and early Republican readers saw Wu bei zhi as a piece of Han history that suffered from erasures at the hands of the Manchus, then we might understand modern scholarship as a process of trying to reclaim that erasure. We might further understand 1911 as a moment when Wu bei zhi became a less talkative object. Up until this point, each instance of woodblock printing showed us when people in China proper cared about Wu bei zhi and everything it potentially symbolized. After 1911, Wu bei zhi was not reprinted in full until the 1980s, in Taiwan in 1984, and the People’s Republic of China in 1989.625 There were more important things to worry about between 1911 and 1980 than the project of reprinting of all the best hits of Chinese literary and scientific history. At this point however, especially in Mainland China, Wu bei zhi was revived and reprinted in all kinds of collectanea. The scars of censorship in Wu bei zhi are scars from an era of foreign rule, and it was reprinted, scars and all. Its haphazard collection history in the libraries of Japan, Taiwan, Canada, and the US hints at the diaspora of Chinese books between 1911 and 1980, another wound of its own kind.

625 For the Taiwanese publication, Mao Yuanyi, Wu bei zhi (Taipei: Huashi chubanshe 華世出版社, 1984). The Mainland Chinese publication was: Zhongguo bingshu jicheng 中國兵書集成 (Collected Chinese military books) (Beijing and Shenyang: Jiefangjun chubanshe and Liao Shen shushe, 1989), vol. 27–36.
It is no coincidence that Mainland Chinese scholarship consistently refers to it as “our country’s largest pre-modern military encyclopedia” (我国古代最大的军事百科全书) or similar.\textsuperscript{626} \textit{Wu bei zhi} is materially an object that represents mine and us, and, to many scholars, that China was once capable of being the biggest and the best at something. Its illustrations of western cannon are evidence that “science” was important, that Chinese people knew technology, that they weren’t just “responding to the West.”\textsuperscript{627} Scholars who choose to study \textit{Wu bei zhi} are choosing to study the wounds of the twentieth century to China proper. However, because \textit{Wu bei zhi} was compiled with the purpose of protecting Ming “China” from outsiders, and because of its history as a “Han” revivalist project in the late-Qing, scholars are also choosing to study China’s relationship to the lands accumulated by force during the Qing dynasty, and retained by force under the People’s Republic of China in the twentieth century, including Tibet and Xinjiang among others. The borders of the Qing empire became the borders of the ethno-state of modern China.\textsuperscript{628} In acknowledging \textit{Wu bei zhi} as a material embodiment of the wounds of the nineteenth and twentieth century to China proper, dealt by Western hands or otherwise, scholars should not forget that \textit{Wu bei zhi} also contains material reminders of a China before the current state violently conquered foreign peripheries that once were and still are.

Acknowledging the violence done \textit{to} the Qing empire, Republican China, and the PRC, should not excuse violence done \textit{by} any of those governments. I have argued that \textit{Wu bei zhi} is a multiple object enacted through plural practices. We should be careful to avoid replicating

\textsuperscript{626} Qiao Na, “Mao Yuanyi \textit{Wu bei zhi} tanxi,” 4.

\textsuperscript{627} These are all commendable objections to the impact-response framework of Teng and Fairbank, \textit{China’s Response to the West}. For a critique, see Cohen, “The Problem with ‘China’s Response to the West,’” in \textit{Discovering History in China}, 9–56.

\textsuperscript{628} Esherick, “How the Qing Became China,” 230–235.
modern scholarly practices that reify *Wu bei zhi* in such a way that it becomes a piece of historical support for political violence.
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