Émmanuel-Édouard CHAVANNES (1865–1918)

Émmanuel-Édouard CHAVANNES was born on October 5, 1865 in Lyon, France. He received a classical elementary and secondary school education there, studying Latin and Greek. In 1885, he was accepted into the École normale supérieure in Paris, where he studied philosophy. After graduating in 1888, he began his study of Chinese. In 1889, he was sent to work in the French embassy in Beijing, where he remained for four years. In 1893, he returned to France, where he was appointed as professor of Chinese at the Collège de France. There he trained some of France’s most prominent Sinologists, including Paul PELLIOT (1878-1945), Henri MASPERO (1883-1945); see the brief biography appended to Chapter Four), and Marcel GRANET (1884-1940). As the most eminent Sinologist in France, he served as secretary of the Société Asiatique from 1895 until 1910, and from 1904 until 1916 he also served as co-editor of the authoritative journal *T'oung Pao*. Moreover, in 1915, he was elected to be president of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He was equally renowned outside of France, including in China, where from 1906 on he served as an honorary member of the Shanghai Oriental Association (Shanghai dongyang xuehui 上海東洋學會). Unfortunately, his career was interrupted first by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, and then before the end of the war by his premature death, on January 29, 1918. He was only 52 years old.
At the end of the nineteenth century, France had already had a long tradition of Sinology, even though at the time most Sinologists were still amateur scholars, not having undergone specialized training in Chinese studies. Chavannes had initially wanted to study Chinese intellectual history, in line with his university training. However, since James LEGGE (1815-1897) had already translated the Four Books and the Five Classics, on the advice of Henri CORDIER (1849-1925) he switched his focus to Chinese history. Cordier recommended that he translate one of the twenty-four standard dynastic histories, and Chavannes decided to translate the first of them, the *Shi ji* (Records of the historian) of SIMA Qian (145-c. 89 B.C.). Upon arriving in China in 1889, he immediately set himself to this work, and in the following year published a translation of one chapter, the “Feng shan shu” (Treatise on the *feng* and *shan* rituals). He continued his work on the *Shi ji* translation for fifteen years, in all translating forty-seven chapters in five large volumes (1895, 1897, 1899, 1901 and 1905). Although the translation was never completed, it is still regarded as marking the highest standards of scholarship.

Even before publishing the first volume of his *Shi ji* translation, Chavannes had already published other scholarship. His first two books, published in 1893 and 1894, set the direction that his subsequent research would take. The first book was entitled *La Sculpture sur pierre en Chine au temps des deux dynasties Han*, a description of stone carvings in Shandong, and especially of the famous Wu Liang shrine. The second book, *Voyages des pèlerins bouddhistes: Les Religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les Pays d’Occident, mémoire compose à l’époque de la grande dynastie T’ang par I-tsing, traduit en francais*, was a translation of the *Da Tang xiyu qiu Fa gao seng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳 by the Tang-dynasty Buddhist monk YIJING (635-713), which included an in-depth study of Central Asia. With this second book, Chavannes won the first of his two Prix Stanislas Julien, awarded to the finest work of Sinology. In addition to his translations, his research largely concerned archaeology and religion. In 1907-08, he returned to China, exploring archaeological sites across north China, and made specially intensive investigation of the religious pilgrimage site of Taishan in Shandong. After returning to Paris, he published his renowned

study *Le T’ai chan: essai de monographie d’un culte chinois*,⁴ which provides a comprehensive account of the 252 temples and shrines on the mountain, with translations of both inscriptions and also all relevant historical documents. This work remains a classic of western Sinology, really the first work in historical archaeology. Chavannes maintained his interest in the religious significance of famous mountains throughout his life. One of his posthumous publications was a study entitled “Le Jet des dragons,” which examined the ancient and medieval Chinese custom of “throwing dragon slips” (*tou long jian* 投龍簡)—the inscribing of prayers on stone and metal slips and throwing them into mountain caves. Among his many other publications was also a translation of *Tai shang Lingbao yu gui ming zhen da zhai yan gong yi* 太上靈寶玉匣明真大齋言功儀 (Retreat of the sworn alliance with the True, from the Jade case of the Divine Jewel), by DU Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), which marked western scholarship’s first use of the *Dao zang* 道藏 (Daoist canon).⁵

Not only did Édouard Chavannes study China’s famous mountains, he also recorded and studied stele inscriptions of all periods from throughout China,⁶ including also the Tang-dynasty Nestorian stele (*Da Qin jingjiao liuxing Zhongguo bei* 大秦景教流行中國碑), which had so long fascinated western scholars.⁷ Most of the steles studied by Chavannes date to the Tang and Song periods, or even to the Qing dynasty, and thus are outside the purview of the current book. However, worthy of note is his early study “Les inscriptions des Ts’in” (30020; 1893), which was a lengthy study of the ten inscribed steles erected by Qin Shi huangdi after his unification of China in 221 B.C. Although Chavannes was only 28 years old at the time that he published this article, and had been studying Chinese for only five years, nevertheless it still stands as one of the finest western studies of Chinese paleography.

Chavannes’s contribution to the study of Chinese paleography was by no means limited to his translations of stone inscriptions. He also made important contributions to the study of records written on wooden slips. Already in 1905,

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⁶ Attached to Henri CORDIER’s obituary of Chavannes is a still incomplete bibliography of his publications, listing 75 books and articles and more than 100 books reviews; see Henri CORDIER, “Necrologie,” *T’oung Pao* 18 (1917): 114-147; see also H. CORDIER, “Édouard Chavannes,” *Journal Asiatique*, 11.11 (1918): 197-248.
his 70-page long study “Les livres chinois avant l’invention du papier” (100040) included an appendix in which he introduced to the scholarly world the Han-dynasty wooden slips that Marc Aurel STEIN (1862-1943) had collected on the first of his expeditions into Xinjiang. When Stein formally published his account of this expedition in 1907 (400080), he invited Chavannes to edit the slips written in Chinese: “Appendix A: Chinese Documents from the Sites Dandân-Uiliq, Niya and Endere Translated and Annotated by Eduard Chavannes” (400090). When Stein collected even more wooden slips during his second expedition in 1906-07, the British Library formally invited Chavannes to write the report on them, which he published in 1913 as Les Documents chinois découverts par Aurel Stein dans les sables du Turkestan Oriental (400120). Not only this, but also in 1911 he introduced western scholars to the newly discovered oracle-bone inscriptions, publishing an article “La divination par l’écaille de tortue dans la haute antiquité chinoise (d’après un livre de M. Lo Tchen-yu)” (200010) in the journal Journal Asiatique.

Among western scholars, it is still quite rare to find one who has made contributions to all of the different sub-fields of Chinese excavated texts covered in the current book: paleography, oracle-bone inscriptions, bronze and stone inscriptions, and bamboo-and-silk manuscripts. The work of Édouard Chavannes is found at the head of every chapter. Already at the time when oracle-bone inscriptions and wooden slip manuscripts were first discovered in China, Chavannes recognized their great scholarly significance; not only did he establish a firm foundation on which western studies of these sources could build, but he also had an important influence on the development of the fields in China. Unfortunately, he did not live to see the many great paleographic discoveries that continued to take place in China throughout the twentieth century.
Lionel Charles HOPKINS was born on March 20, 1854, in what was then the London suburb of Hampstead. His father Manley HOPKINS was a businessman and amateur poet, his elder brother Gerard Manley HOPKINS (1844-1889) was one of the great English poets of the nineteenth century, and the life and work of all seven of his other siblings also revolved around language and poetry. Aside from managing his own insurance company, his father also served for a period as England’s consul-general in Hawaii, which may also have had a formative influence on young Lionel. In 1871, Lionel also entered the English foreign service, and in 1874 was dispatched to Beijing, where he served as a translator at the English embassy. He would go on to serve in Beijing and various treaty ports for the next thirty-four years: in 1895, he was appointed vice-consul in Shanghai, in 1897 he was consul-general in Qufu 曲阜, and in 1901 became consul-general in Tianjin 天津. In 1908, he retired from the diplomatic service, on account of ill health, and returned to England. Already in 1886, his family had moved from their home in Hampstead to the small village of Haslemere in southeastern Surrey. Lionel joined two of his sisters there, from which he would very rarely venture forth for the next almost half century. The local inhabitants of the village recounted that his time was split between his library and his garden. The only trip he would take, once a year, was to London to attend the annual meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society, of which he long served as the vice-president. Also, almost on an annual basis, he published at least one article, and often two, in the journal of the society. Despite his early retirement on the grounds of ill health, he proved to be extremely long-lived and clear-minded to the end, continuing his family’s passion
Lionel Charles HOPKINS (1854-1952) 

for language and poetry (he particularly enjoyed writing limericks). He finally passed away on March 11, 1952, just before his 98th birthday.

From the beginning of his study of China, Lionel Hopkins was always fascinated with Chinese writing. Already in 1881, he translated the Liu shu gu 六書故 (Rationale of the six types of script) of DAI Tong 戴侗 (jinshi 1241) of the Song dynasty, adding a preface of his own in which he explained the rationale behind the writing system. In 1889, he published a very different type of book: Guan hua zhinan 官話指南 (Directions for Mandarin). This was a Chinese-language primer that had been prepared for Japanese living in Beijing, edited in 1881 by WU Qitai 吳啟太 and ZHENG Yongbang 鄭永邦, who were interpreters at the Japanese embassy in Beijing. After Hopkins translated it into English, it was adopted for use by most of the diplomatic corps in Beijing. In the 1895 issue of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, he published his first scholarly article: “On the Origin and Earlier History of the Chinese Coinage.”1 Although this article hinted at Hopkins’ work that would come in the field of Chinese paleography, it would be almost twenty years before he published another article.

In 1906, he learned that Frank H. CHALFANT (1862-1914) had just published a study entitled Early Chinese Writing (100050). Hopkins thereupon wrote to Chalfant, the letter primarily concerning ancient Chinese coins, for which Chalfant shared Hopkins’ interest. In return, Chalfant sent Hopkins a copy of his Early Chinese Writing. In 1908, just before he was about to retire to England, Hopkins visited the Anglo-Chinese University (Ying Hua daxue 英華大學) in Tianjin, and saw there twenty-five oracle bones that WANG Zonglie 王崇烈 (d. 1918), the son of WANG Yirong 王懿榮 (1845-1900), had donated to the university. The university invited Hopkins to write an article in English, introducing these artifacts to the alumni of the school. His essay was included in that year’s issue of the school’s College Echoes. Faced with character shapes that he had never before encountered, Hopkins drew to a considerable extent on Chalfant’s Early Chinese Writing. From this time, these two men began an exchange of letters that would continue for several years, even after Hopkins had returned to England. Bit by bit, Chalfant also arranged for Hopkins to purchase oracle bones; in all, Hopkins would purchase about 900 pieces, which he eventually bequeathed to the University of Cambridge in England.2

After returning to England, Hopkins began his paleographic researches in earnest. In 1911, he published the first of his forty-three articles in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*: “Chinese Writing in the Chou Dynasty in the Light of Recent Discoveries” (100090). In this article, he introduced some of the oracle-bone inscriptions in his own collection. Although both SUN Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848-1908) and Frank Chalfant had already pointed out that the oracle bones dated to the Shang dynasty, and the year before LUO Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940) had already traced them to Anyang, nevertheless in this first scholarly study Hopkins wrote of them as Zhou-dynasty artifacts. The next year he published “The Chinese Bronze Known as the ‘Bushell Bowl’ and Its Inscription” (300090), a study of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s *Jin Hou pan* 晉侯盤, better known in the West as the “Bushell Bowl,” and its 538-character long inscription. From the standpoint of what we now know about ancient Chinese bronze vessels, it is easy to see that this vessel and its inscription is a forgery. Although Hopkins’ first two scholarly efforts were thus not very successful, this did not stop him from continuing to publish. In just the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* alone, he published forty-three separate articles in all, the last one coming in 1947, when he was already 93 years old: “A Cryptic Message and a New Solution” (200780).

The research of Lionel Hopkins was not always correct, but it was always extremely entertaining. He had a playfulness of expression that is not at all easy to characterize, but which is well on display in the final paragraph of “A Cryptic Message and a New Solution,” his last published article.

De minimis non curat lex. Does this dictum hold good elsewhere than in Courts of Law? Is my hypothetical battle between the Pro-batrachians and the Pro-arachnids perhaps one of such minims? Will the contest be adjudged as of Lilliputian dimensions and as an inadequate criterion of archaeological or even epigraphic values? However the verdict may go, there will remain the old proverb counseling the cobbler to stick to his last, and that counsel I may claim to have observed to the last.

Hopkins did indeed “observe to the last” his fascination with Chinese writing, and especially the oracle-bone inscriptions of the Shang dynasty.
Klas Bernhard Johannes KARLGREN was born on October 15, 1889 in Jönköping, Sweden. An eminent Sinologist, paleographer and linguist, he is particularly noted for his contributions to the reconstruction of ancient Chinese phonology. At the age of 18, he entered the University of Uppsala, initially studying Russian. However, in the course of his studies he encountered the great phonologist J.A. Lundell (1851-1940), who suggested to him that he should switch his focus to Chinese instead. Because Sweden was lacking in a professor of Chinese at that time, after graduating from Uppsala Karlgren went to St. Petersburg to study with the Russian Sinologist A.I. IVANOV (1878-1937). In 1910, he then went to China, first living in Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi, and then after the fall of the Qing dynasty moving to Beijing. During his time in China, he split his time between studying modern Chinese and doing research on Chinese dialects. He also assiduously collected material that would be useful for his future research (for instance, while visiting Xi’an 西安 he obtained a complete set of rubbings of the Tang-dynasty classics engraved on the steles housed at the Forest of Steles 碑林). According to one account, he alternately taught French and English to supplement the income from his research fellowship, demonstrating as well his command of modern languages. In 1912, he returned to Europe to pursue his graduate studies, first studying with Lionel GILES (1875–1958) in England and then afterwards going to Paris to study with the two great Sinologists Édouard CHAVANNES (1865–1918); see the brief biography appended to this chapter) and Paul PELLIOT (1878–1945), as well as the Indologist Sylvain LÉVI (1863–1935). In 1915, he completed a four-volume dissertation entitled Études sur la phonologie chinoise, which offered a reconstruction of the sounds of medieval Chinese. In the very next year, this dissertation won the Prix
Stanislaus Julien, awarded for the finest work in western Sinology. In 1918, he received an appointment as professor at the University of Gothenburg in his native Sweden, where he remained until 1939, when he became director the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm. He remained in that position until 1959, when upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 70 he was required to step down. However, even after retirement, he continued to pursue his research. He passed away in Stockholm on October 20, 1978, at the age of 89.

Karlgren’s renown came early through his research on ancient and medieval Chinese phonology, and his contributions in this field are well known to everyone interested in the Chinese language. Already in 1930 his doctoral dissertation was translated into Chinese by three of the leading young linguists of that day: Y.R. CHAO 趙元任 (ZHAO Yuanren; 1892-1982), LUO Changpei 羅常培 (1899-1958) and F.K. LI 李方桂 (LI Fanggui; 1902-1987).1 After this, many of his other scholarly works were also translated into Chinese, including Sound and Symbol in Chinese (1923)2 and Philology and Ancient China (1926).3 His Grammata Serica, which established the foundation for the study of Chinese word families, was also translated into Chinese.4 While editing Grammata Serica, Karlgren also made substantial use of paleographic evidence, including both oracle-bone and bronze inscriptive forms of characters. Although he never devoted himself to the study of paleography, he was not uninterested in the topic, publishing in the 1936 issue of the Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities a short piece entitled “On the Script of the Chou Dynasty” (300310). From this time through the end of the 1950s, he was also the western world’s leading scholar of ancient Chinese bronze vessels, publishing numerous catalogs and studies, such as “Early Chinese Mirror Inscriptions” (300240; 1934), “On the Date of the Piao-Bells” (300250; 1934), “Yin and Chou in Chinese Bronzes” (300300; 1936), “Huai and Han” (300390; 1941), “Bronzes in the Hellström Collection” (300490; 1948), “Some Bronzes in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities” (300510; 1949), “Some New Bronzes in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities” (300560; 1952), and “Bronzes in the Wessén Collection” (300610; 1958). Most of these studies and catalogs were published in the Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, and many of them were well over a

1 GAO Benhan 高本漢, Zhongguo yinyunxue yanjiu 中國音韻學研究, ZHAO Yuanren (Y.R. CHAO 趙元任, LUO Changpei 羅常培, and LI Fanggui 李方桂 tr. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930); Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan 1994; Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 2007).
2 GAO Benhan 高本漢, Zhongguo yu yu Zhongguo wen 中國語與中國文, ZHANG Shilu 張世祿 tr. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933).
3 GAO Benhan 高本漢, Zhongguo yuyanxue yanjiu 中國語言學研究, HE Changqun 賀昌群 tr. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934).
4 GAO Benhan 高本漢, Han wen dian 漢文典, PAN Wuyun 潘悟雲 et al tr. (Shanghai Shanghai Cishu chubanshe, 1997).
Bernhard KARLGREN (1889-1978) 57

hundred pages long. At the same time, he also turned his attention to ancient Chinese texts, producing heavily annotated translations of several important texts, including especially the Shangshu 尚書 (Elevated scriptures) and Shi jing 詩經 (Classic of poetry). These works have also all been translated into Chinese.5

Prior to passing away, Karlgren was fortunate enough to see the publication of the Mawangdui Laozi 老子, the text of which he was just then translating. However, he did not get to make much use of these manuscripts. In the 1930s, the Swedish archaeologist Sven HEDIN (1865-1952) invited Karlgren to edit the Han-dynasty wooden slips that he had discovered at Juyan 居延. Hedin’s long letter to Karlgren has been translated by Lothar von FALKENHAUSEN, and is full of human and scholarly interest. Falkenhausen has also translated Karlgren’s reply. Karlgren turned down this invitation, saying on the one hand that his teaching duties were too heavy, and on the other hand that his health at the time was not ideal. However, he claimed that the main reason for declining to undertake this sort of editorial work was because he felt that his paleographic skills were not up to it. He wrote:

As concerns the assignment, then, I will tell you clearly and honestly right away that I am certainly not the best person for it. My production, after all, lies essentially in the domain of pure historical linguistics, and that would be something completely different. While I am convinced that I can bang just as loudly as any other European (except for Pelliot and possibly Maspero, I can never in any way compare to a decent Chinese expert on writing when it is a question of interpreting the devilish curvise script (grass writing). Chavannes, who translated Stein’s first and second shipments, had incompetence collaborators, which is why that large book belongs among his worst things. Luo Zhenyu has had to revise his readings thoroughly. Conrady’s readings are quite good, but he would never in his life have been able to get them straight if he had not had the assistance of the latterly famous Cai Yuanpei, who by a quirk of fate was just then enrolled at Leipzig.6

For his ability to recognize his own limitations, as well as for all of his many contributions, Bernhard Karlgren can surely serve as a model of scholarship.7

5 GAO Benhan 高本漢, Gao Benhan Shi zhushi 高本漢詩注釋, DONG Tonghe 董同龢 tr. (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, 1960); Gao Benhan Shu jing zhushi 高本漢書經注釋, CHEN Shunzheng 陳舜政 tr. (Taipei: Zhonghua congshu bianshen weiyuanhui, 1970).
Tsuen-hsuin TSIEN 錢存訓 (1909-2015)

Tsuen-hsuin (T.H.) TSIEN 錢存訓, who was born in 1909 in Taixian 泰縣, Jiangsu, lived a very long and very eventful life. Before ever entering university, he had already participated as a soldier in the Nationalist government’s Northern Expedition. With that experience behind him, in 1928 he entered Jinling University 金陵大學 (the current Nanjing University 南京大學), where he studied with LIU Guojun 劉國鈞 (1887-1978), attending his courses “The History of Chinese Books” and “Library Classifications.” After graduating in 1932, he worked first at the Jiaotong University 交通大學 library in Shanghai, and then at the Nanjing Project Reference Department (at that time, the Nanjing subsidiary of the Peiping Library), of which he subsequently became director. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the National Library of China made plans to ship 30,000 rare books to the United States for safekeeping, and T.H. Tsien was put in charge of this task. At the beginning of December 1941, late at night he personally oversaw the loading of the books on an American naval destroyer. Just days later, Japanese forces attacked the American base at Pearl Harbor, bringing about war between Japan and the United States. However, by then the American destroyer with the Chinese rare books was already at sea, and the books eventually arrived safely in Washington, where they were stored at the American Library of Congress. Tsien later recounted that if the Japanese authorities in Shanghai had known what he was doing, he would certainly have been shot for it. Fortunately, not only did he himself survive this adventure, but he lived to an extremely old age, working well past the age of 100. In 2011, at the age of 102, he published his last book:
Collected Writings on Chinese Culture.\(^1\) On April 9, 2015, he passed away in Chicago at the age of 106.

In 1947, T.H. Tsien was sent to the United States to oversee the repatriation of the Chinese rare books. Unfortunately, just at that time, the Chinese political situation deteriorated, and the Republic of China government determined that the books should remain in the United States for the foreseeable future. Tsien himself also had to remain in the United States. At that time, Herrlee G. Creel (1905-1994; see the brief biography appended to Chapter Three) of the University of Chicago, who was pursuing research at the Library of Congress at the time and had come to know Tsien there, invited him to come to Chicago to bring order to the great number of books he had bought in China. Tsien accepted this invitation, and at Chicago split his time between directing the Chinese library and studying as a graduate student, earning an M.A. degree in 1952 with a thesis on Chinese translations of western works, and then a Ph.D. degree in 1957 with a dissertation entitled “The Pre-Printing Records of China: A Study of the Development of Early Inscriptions and Books.” Five years later, in 1962, a revised version of this dissertation was formally published as Written on Bamboo and Silk: The Beginnings of Chinese Books and Inscriptions (100490). This book provided a comprehensive overview of all Chinese writings down to the invention of printing in China, touching on all the different topics in paleography known at the time. Tsien demonstrated a vast knowledge not only of traditional Chinese literature, but also of all the relevant archaeological discoveries known at the time. Although the University of Chicago Press, the publisher of the book, had initially been reluctant to publish it, regarding it as overly specialized, the book became an instant classic, quickly selling out three printings. In 2004, at the age of 95, Tsien issued a revised and expanded second edition, in which he was able to take account of the remarkable archaeological discoveries that had been made between 1960 and 2000. Thus, this book has provided a foundation in Chinese paleography for several generations of western students. The first edition of the book was translated numerous times into Chinese (in both traditional and simplified character versions), Korean and Japanese, and the second edition was also immediately translated into Chinese.\(^2\)

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2. Qian Cunxun (TSIEN Tsuen-hsuin) 錢存訓, Shu yu zhu bo: Zhongguo gudai de wenzi jilu 書于竹帛：中國古代的文字記錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2004).
Tsuen-hsuin Tsien’s contributions to the history of Chinese books is by no means limited to just this one book. In 1978, when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 at the University of Chicago Library, he accepted another invitation, this time from Joseph NEEDHAM (1990-1995), to author the volume on paper and printing for Needham’s monumental *Science and civilisation in China*. Over the next six years, Tsien devoted himself to this task, publishing volume 5.1 of *Science and civilisation in China* in 1984, the first volume that did not appear under Needham’s own name, but had only the name Tsuen-hsuin Tsien on the title page.³ As with *Written on Bamboo and Silk* before it, this volume too not only won widespread praise from reviewers, but was also one of the top selling books of Needham’s series.