



# 1840, 1876, 1902 and 1920s: The Early Phases of Chinese Architectural Studies by Western Scholars

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**Abstract.** In this article, the study of Chinese architecture by foreign scholars was divided into four phases. Before 1840, there had been a long history of imagining about China, with exaggerated words and distorted images varying along with the political or artistic changes of the Western world. These misunderstandings continued until the 1870s. Not much documentation had been accumulated on Chinese architecture in those days, other than a few basic descriptions and photos, which also led to some negative judgments among foreign Chinese architecture scholars. After the 1870s, the interests of Westerners were aroused as the country opened up to foreign exchanges. And in order to develop colonial territories and explore the continent's resources to alleviate economic pressures in the Western empires, specialists were sent to China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by the explorations of orientalists, sinologists, art historians and architects in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this way, Chinese architecture started to be examined and documented carefully. The study of published periodicals in the field of Sinology not only reveals a concordance with the aforementioned 4-phase division, but also provides a close look to the process whereby Chinese architecture studies gradually became a “notable doctrine” among Western researchers.

**Keywords:** Chinese architecture studies · Historiography · Western scholars · Sinologists · Orientalists · Sinology journals

## 1 Introduction

There have been plenty of general studies on Western Sinology ranging from the early Middle Ages up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. But when it comes to the hundred-year period between the Opium War and World War II, during which Sinology gradually entered the modern era, it is difficult to find a comprehensive and structural study on the domain of Architecture, which came out as a full-blown discipline, emerging from the fields of Art History, Archeology and Ethnography, among others. Most of the research done up until now is in a fragmented state, focusing on individual sinologists, separate countries, or single monographs, lacking a broader, vertical connection with international contexts or politics, and a closer horizontal linkage with networks of scholars and institutions.

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Dr. Chen Xiaochong has proposed a brief framework in his Ph.D. dissertation *Interpretation on the views of Chinese Architecture by modern Western Scholars from a “non-historical” perspective* (2015) which includes the three following periods: the time before 1840 is the “germination period”; the time between 1840 and 1900 is an “exploration period” and the time between 1900 and 1937 is the “maturation period”.<sup>1</sup> In the “germination period” there are the early impressions on China from Marco Polo, Matteo Ricci and other missionaries, William Chambers, the Macartney Embassy, etc.; in the “exploration period” we have textual descriptions and image records from Felice Beato, James Fergusson, Banister Fletcher, and so forth; and in the “maturation period” there is a considerable amount of professional research from Stephen Wootton Bushell, Édouard Chavannes, Paul Pelliot, Paul Demiéville, Ernst Boerschmann, Gustav Ecke, and many others.

This division is generally accurate depending on the number of publications and the depth of study found in sinological monographs during the hundred-year period. However, if we take into account the rise and decline of “Chinoiserie” in Europe from the late 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century, or Fergusson and Fletcher’s prejudice towards Chinese architecture in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century historical writing, or Paul Pelliot’s 1927 statement that “Chinese art is now fashionable, and we can think that it is not an ephemeral infatuation”,<sup>2</sup> it is reasonable to consider these hundred years not just as a gradually emerging process, but also one that involved emotional shifts affected by China’s situation and European speculations.

## 2 Four Phases of the Western Study of China and Chinese Architecture Before World War II

### 2.1 Before 1840: In the Crevice Between Imagination and Reality

Dr. Yan Jianqiang claimed in his dissertation:

*People usually take the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as the declining stage of “Chinoiserie” (...) with the excavation of Pompeii, the so-called “Chinoiserie style” or “Chinese taste” and its impact had been replaced by classicism; the publication of An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations meant the decline of physiocracy influenced by China; The suppression of the Jesuits not only interrupted the main source of information from China, but also brought an end to the “Chinese Rites Controversy” to a great extent; And the failure of the Macartney Embassy was considered as the sign of the end of “Chinoiserie” (...) in René Étiemble’s words, people’s attitude towards China “had shifted from admiration to exclusion.”<sup>3</sup>*

He summarized almost all the reasons why the Europeans had turned away from their interest in China, which can be seen as the fundamental context for the coming studies.

<sup>1</sup> Chen (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Pelliot (1927), pp. 110–134. Translated by the author.

<sup>3</sup> Yan (2002), p. 228. Translated by the author.

It can be said that most of the reasons come from internal shifts in Europe, and from China being seen as an Eastern, mysterious ancient country which was for the most part referenced only when Europeans wanted to express their own ideas in philosophy, politics, or religion. “China” was then situated in the crevice between imagination and reality, but with the end of the “High Qing” period (also called the ‘Kangqian prosperous age’) and the spread of European colonization, the images of this distant country, whether good or bad, were fragmented after the opening of the ports to foreign trade.

Mason Gertrude argued the following in the famous work *Western Concepts of China and the Chinese* published in 1939:

*The year 1840 marks the outbreak of the first Anglo-Chinese War which is a turning-point in the history of China as well as for Chinese and Western relations (...) The date 1840 is also the point of departure for the breakdown of old concepts and the gradual formation of new ideas about China which gathered momentum slowly through the remainder of the nineteenth century.*<sup>4</sup>

That is to say, after 1840, although a lot more Europeans could step into the continent or even immigrate into the country on their own, it still took time to look carefully around the country and gather first-hand information. Therefore, it was not until the year 1876 that the attitude of the Western world started to change.

## 2.2 Circa 1876: A Smooth Transitional Curve

Mason Gertrude continued: “Although Western knowledge was increasing noticeably by 1876, this date is a more or less arbitrary limit for the study. There is no definite shift in European or American interest in China”.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there was nothing so significant as the 1840 Opium War or the turn of the century in 1900, and as Mason Gertrude argued before, this process of change was gradual and slow. But there were still some events worth mentioning.

The Taiping Rebellion, which happened from 1851 to 1864, regarded as the largest civil war after the Ming-Qing war, had a great influence not only on China’s history, but also on Western people’s impressions of the country. The reason was that this was the first time that Chinese people tried to resist against the venal Qing government by using knowledge from the Western world, even it was just some far-fetched concepts gathered from Christianity and the Bible. When compared to the Meiji Restoration in Japan which took place in the following years (from 1868), the Taiping Rebellion was apparently less progressive, but even Japan’s reform policies had some positive impact on Westerners’ thoughts on China to the point that they regained respect for the Eastern sphere and interest in its arts and civilizations.

There were also some less political events taking place just in the year of 1876, such as the completion of Woosung Road, which was the first foreign-invested railway, and China’s big success in staging the Chinese section in the World Exposition of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with a large amount of fine art specimens. The former gave hope

<sup>4</sup> Mason (1929), p. vii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

to foreign businessmen, and the latter attracted the attention of Western scholars and collectors. This was later to be taken as the “awakening of China”:

*...although a few Westerners referred to the ‘awakening’ of China usually as a direct consequence of the T’ai P’ing Rebellion, the Western concept of China’s ‘awakening’ belongs to a period after 1876. Europeans and Americans believed, however, that the country had begun to stir from within, and these signs of life made them more hopeful of its future.*<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the years around 1876 could be seen as the turning point, or rather, a smooth transitional curve.

Actually, a number of European countries entered the so-called “Age of Empire (1875–1914)”, defined by Eric Hobsbawm, and also known as “New Imperialism”.<sup>7</sup> It was a period when the European empires were faced with serious economic decline and had to accelerate the process of colonization in order to alleviate economic pressure. At that time, China was set as the most likely target. So, learning about China became not only a matter of spontaneous will but also a matter of necessity.

Speaking of architectural history, there was one coincidence in that the first edition of *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* written by James Fergusson was published precisely in 1876. The book was famous and is still famous now in China not because it was the first general architectural history book discussing Chinese architecture (although still in a very incipient manner), but for the disparaging remarks made towards Chinese architecture. “...there really are no buildings in the country worthy of the people or their civilization” was what Fergusson claimed at the beginning of a chapter filled with this kind of commentaries.<sup>8</sup> Before this book, his *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture* had been published in 1855, in which the attitude towards Chinese architecture was just the same.

Actually, as he admitted in the book, the seacoast fringe area is “the only part of the country we are really acquainted with”.<sup>9</sup> Also, his sojourn in China and the Eastern world took place around the 1840s, when he could hardly have the chance to go deep inside the country, and the lack of documentation on Chinese architecture led him to such a misunderstanding, of which he was quite aware; so when he concluded the chapter on Chinese and Japanese architecture, he said: “It is the same story as in China: we shall not know whether it is true that there are no objects worthy to be styled architecture in Japan till the island is more scientifically explored than it has been...”.<sup>10</sup>

This gave great stimulus to the Japanese architectural historian Itō Chūta 伊东忠太, who was about to start his investigation on Chinese architecture from 1901 onwards, and latter would give a speech on the opening ceremony of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture in 1930, proposing that “Chinese researchers mainly focus on Chinese documents and Japanese researchers on Chinese architectural relics”.<sup>11</sup> Considering the

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> Forte (2010).

<sup>8</sup> Fergusson (1876), p. 685.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 686.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 710.

<sup>11</sup> Itō (1930), p. 9. Translated by the author.

importance of architectural investigation in those days, the words of Itō Chūta would eventually stimulate and inspire young Chinese scholars in the same manner.

These situations paint a general picture of the days before 1876, in the sense that when the majority of Westerners were preparing to become more familiar with China, the country was still a stereotype formed by a long-term seclusion, which emphasizes the significance of rigorous scientific documentation on Chinese architectural relics when talking about architectural history. In another general architectural book, when talking about Chinese architecture, Eliza Chalk said: “For many years our country has been so effectually barred from entering within the precincts of the celestial empire, that little opportunity has been afforded us of judging correctly upon various points”.<sup>12</sup> Although without negative judgement, the author expressed the same urgent needs for architectural investigation as James Fergusson, which would only be satisfied in the next century.

### 2.3 After 1902: China as the Field of Modern Disciplines

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the interest of Western intellectuals and their feelings towards Chinese architecture were inseparable with those of China itself, for the reason that they knew little about the former, lacked enough investigation, and were easily influenced by political or religious factors. In the process of colonialism, the modern disciplines of humanities such as linguistics and ethnography developed and flourished, and rational scientific research started to replace personal speculation. Thus, the historic Chinese continent became the experimental field of learned societies under the development of modern disciplines in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the year of 1902, the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Orientalists (XII. Congrès International des Orientalistes) was held in Hamburg, Germany. During the conference, Marc Aurel Stein reported the process and achievements of his first expedition in Central Asia between 1900 and 1901, which was successful. Then, the International Association for the Exploration in Central Asia and Far East (L’Association Internationale pour l’Exploration de l’Asie Centrale et de l’Extreme Orient) was set up, and a number of exploration groups and missions were about to be organized by each country. The definition and objectives of the expedition were formulated in their document titled *Project* as follows:

- *In accordance with the decision of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Orientalists, an international association will be founded to explore Central Asia and the Far East from the point of view of history, archeology, linguistics and ethnography of these countries*
- *The purpose of the association is: a. Work as much as possible in the exploration of material monuments and in the research and study of the documents kept so far in these countries in scientific order. b. Make decisions by common efforts and constant communication with the competent persons and the scientific establishments remaining in these regions, which monuments are to be examined first and which peoples are demanding an immediate inquiry to be preserved in science at the point of view of ethnography and linguistics. c. Make representations to the government concerned*

<sup>12</sup> Chalk (1847), p. 167.

*in order to attract their kind attention to the conservation of monuments which are threatened with imminent disappearance either by time or by the hand of man. d. Put together the examination of monuments and races, projecting for a conscientious exploration and for the study of questions relating to all these peoples. e. Try to enable scientists of all nationalities to participate in this work.*<sup>13</sup>

The above-stated purposes showed not only the advanced methods intended for use in the missions, but also emphasize the importance of the investigation and protection of “material monuments”, including architecture. This was the first large-scale and multinational joint expedition project concerning architecture in modern times, although it was mainly focused on Central Asia and the Chinese Turkestan (now Xinjiang) area. Nevertheless, the main participants, such as Henri Cordier, Paul Pelliot, Friedrich Hirth, etc., were all leading scholars in the field of Sinology. And the direct purpose of this association was academic, although the political context cannot be totally ignored.

In the year of 1902, there was another important person stepping into China, Ernst Boerschmann. At that time, he was working on the East Asian occupation brigade (Ostasiatische Besatzungsbrigade),<sup>14</sup> as an architectural inspector, and gained a passion for Chinese architecture. After returning to Germany in 1904, he tried to get funding from the German Reichstag and then started his journey in China from 1906 to 1909. In the following years, he published a series of three books on the “architecture and the religious culture of the Chinese”, two books on the types of Chinese architecture, and his most successful publication: *Picturesque China*, among many other articles.<sup>15</sup>

There were two factors that defined Boerschmann as a key person in Chinese architectural history studies, even when compared with latter Japanese or Chinese scholars. One was that he was the first one to document a large amount of cases of Chinese architecture while employing Western standards. Actually, Heinrich Hildebrand (1853–1924) had documented and published the *Temple of Enlightenment* (Dajuesi) using Western methods in 1897, but it was just a single case and did not bring about such a large international influence as Boerschmann’s publications. In those days, there were hardly any useful pictorial documentations of Chinese architecture, not to mention plans, sections or elevations, and even photographs were sometimes used as fundamental resources for some dissertation in Chinese architectural research, to the point that Gisbert Combaz’s<sup>16</sup> (1869–1941) plans and drawings of altars in Beijing, devoid of proportions or correct lineweights, were still quoted in some Chinese architectural history monographs.

Furthermore, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* in 1910, Richard Phené Spiers (1838–1916) still complained in his expanded section on Eastern architecture: “One of the great difficulties experienced in any description of Chinese architecture is the absence of plans of either temples, palaces, monasteries or

<sup>13</sup> Cordier (1902), p. 322. Translated by the author.

<sup>14</sup> It was formally the East Asian Expeditionary Corps (Ostasiatische Expeditionskorps), sent to China to suppress the Boxer Rebellion.

<sup>15</sup> Kögel (2015), p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> A Belgian artist, who had published *Les palais impériaux de la Chine, Les sépultures impériales de la Chine, Les temples impériaux de la Chine* in the 1910s.

dwelling”.<sup>17</sup> What’s more, in Chavannes’ commentary of *Die Baukunst und religiöse Kultur der Chinesen*, we could figure out how unfamiliar and surprised sinologists were when they were faced with standard documentation of Chinese architectural cases:

*Instead of the bad photographs or sketch-forms which we have hitherto had to content ourselves with studying the arrangement of a building, we are dealing with plans and elevations of mathematical rigor; In addition, constant scales of 1: 600 or 1: 300 or 1: 150 were adopted to facilitate comparisons; Finally, the photographs which accompany the geometrical surveys are remarkably sharp; There is, then, a whole technical work which has never before been attempted so extensively and which, as it spreads, will really lay the foundations of the science of Chinese architecture.*<sup>18</sup>

Another factor was that the documentation elaborated by Boerschmann was unique. Eduard Kögel said, “In China new things would come out, especially since the Chinese society had just undergone reforms in many aspects of politics, culture and economy. Boerschmann expressed his fear that this could mean the Chinese would lose their traditions”.<sup>19</sup> Boerschmann was sensitively aware of the urgency of recording traditional architecture in a rapidly-changing China. This change would happen not only in terms of construction methods, but also in the relationship between architecture and religion, which was Boerschmann’s main topic.

In fact, the subsequent Xinhai Revolution in 1911 overthrew China’s last imperial dynasty, and the New Culture Movement from the mid-1910s–20s strongly recommended the replacement of “Mr. Confucius” by “Mr. Science” and “Mr. Democracy”, not to mention the entire 100 years spent in a context of democratic revolutions. “However, Boerschmann was fully aware that this event changed the holistic framework he was attempting to establish. He therefore regarded his work as the only way of preserving the web of buildings located in accordance with religious concepts, at least on paper”.<sup>20</sup> In conclusion, the work of Boerschmann not only recorded the state of Chinese architecture of the time, but also expressed concern with the linkage between architecture and religion, which was almost ignored in the coming studies of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture, responding to the new political environment. Not until very recently was the interrelated topic of architecture and religion brought up again in China.

An interesting thing was that Boerschmann was neither a historian nor a sinologist, but an architect, and in this manner, new methods and new standards were introduced *back* into the field of Chinese architectural studies.

### 3 Architectural Studies in Sinology Journals in the 1920s

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Western research in Chinese architecture had finally flourished, and was becoming more and more specialized, leading to a lot

<sup>17</sup> Fergusson (1910), p. 446.

<sup>18</sup> Chavannes (1911), p. 755. Translated by the author.

<sup>19</sup> Kögel (2015), p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

of published monographs, which were discussed by Dr. Chen Xiaochong in his Ph.D. dissertation.<sup>21</sup> Compared to architectural monographs, the articles in journals were more influenced by the immediate environment and people's direct thinking, and showed a variety of perspectives in the study of architecture, which can be taken as one portion of the entire historical context.

By investigating the number of Sinology-related journals established during the 100-year period,<sup>22</sup> it can be seen in Fig. 1 that there was a drought in the 1880s, when no related journal was established, and in the 1920s a crest, just as the feelings of the Western sphere towards China were shifting, although with some lag.

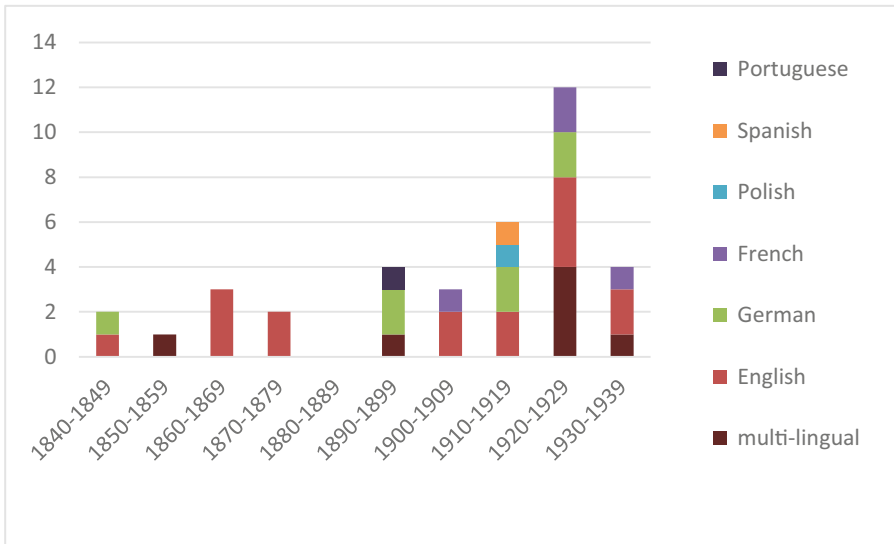


Fig. 1. Founding year of journals related to Sinology from 1840–1939.

The eight journals founded before 1880 were *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1843), *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (1847), *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1858), *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* (1861), *Chinese and Japanese Repository* (1863), *Notes and queries on China and Japan* (1867), *The Phoenix: a Monthly Magazine for China, Japan & Eastern Asia* (1870) and *The China Review* (1872). The first three were the official publications of their respective organizations, with the names of Oriental Society or Asiatic Society, aiming at the “cultivation of learning in the Asiatic, African, and Polynesian languages” or to “enlighten themselves and their compatriots and to improve their position in the land of their sojourn”.

<sup>21</sup> Chen (2015).

<sup>22</sup> This list of sinological journals is a combination of the lists found in Ishida Mikinosuke 石田 幹之助's 1942 dissertation *Study on China in Western countries* and Miner Searle Bates's 1933 article *An introduction to oriental journals in Western languages*.



These kinds of journals were initially meant to serve businessmen or immigrants in China in the context of ports opening after the war, and the same journals would later showcase an interest in Chinese culture. *Notes and queries on China and Japan* and *The Phoenix* were both edited by James Summers to provide detailed information about Eastern life to Europeans for the reason that “No country in the world has been more misunderstood than China”,<sup>23</sup> but neither of them lasted long. *The China Review* was a little different from others because it focused not only on the society of China, but also on Chinese thinking. In general, early journals on China contained a wide range of subjects, and mostly reported the current affairs and local conditions in China, which were a first-hand resource for knowing about the country.

The journals emerging from 1880 to 1909 demonstrate the urgency of research in China under the context of Hobsbawm’s ‘new imperialism’, especially in the fields of linguistics and geography. *Mitteilungen Des Seminars Für Orientalische Sprachen* (1898) and *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* (1900) were publications brought forth by schools which were established to deliver interpreters and scholars to China. The famous *T’oung pao* (1890) also published several geographical articles on French Indochina and Yunnan in those days, and some of them could be taken as serving towards the preliminary investigation for the Yunnan-Vietnam railway construction.

In the 1920s, plenty of journals on Eastern art history were founded, which constitute the crest seen in Fig. 1. The most notable were *The China journal* (1923), *Revue des arts asiatiques* (1924), *Artibus Asiae* (1925), *Eastern Art* (1928) and *Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities Bulletin* (1929). At that time, art history was a young discipline that had just been fully acknowledged in Europe. One reason for the formation of the aforementioned crest might be that the investigations conducted by organizations like the International Association for the Exploration in Central Asia and Far East in each country brought forth countless eastern artifacts into Europe, some of which were maintained in museums or art galleries, like the Stein Antiques collection in the British Museum. This promoted further research in Eastern art history, thus encouraging the study of Chinese architecture as well.

Even so, it was rare to see a specific rubric for “architecture”, and the various treatises were seldom categorized as a whole. It was not until the 1930s that the “architecture” rubric first appeared in *Monumenta Serica* (1935), in which Gustav Ecke devoted the most effort, under the rubric of “Contributions to the Study of Sculpture and Architecture”. As the founding editor of the journal and also as a member of the Society for the Study of Chinese Architecture since 1931, Ecke not only wrote 5 articles and 1 review on the subject in *Monumenta Serica* from 1935 to 1943, but also introduced the Society in his *The Institute for research in Chinese Architecture. A short summary of the Field Work carried on from Spring 1932 to Spring 1937* in the second volume of the journal published in 1937.

Another aspect visible in Fig. 1 is that the proportion of multilingual sinological journals apparently rose up after 1920. There were *Acta Orientalia* (1923), *Asia Major* (1924) and *Artibus Asiae* (1925). Actually, most of these multilingual journals were founded in German-speaking areas (although *Acta Orientalia* was in the French-speaking area of the Netherlands), where the field of Art History had its strongest roots. Owing

<sup>23</sup> Summers (1870), p. 1.

to Nazism, the emigration of German sinologists took place from 1933 onward, which brought an end to *Asia Major*, thought to be the only German sinological journal with international standing.<sup>24</sup> However, these German sinologists continued their studies in other countries, such as the United States and even China, which contributed to a rise in journals founded in these areas after 1930, the most notable being *Monumenta Serica*, *The Far Eastern Quarterly* (1934) and *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (1935).<sup>25</sup>

Not all sinological journals would last long; almost one-third ceased publication long before the war for various reasons. *T'oung pao* was different. By reviewing the articles on Chinese architecture in *T'oung pao*, which was established at an early stage, and seldom suffered any suspension, the trend in Western studies of Chinese architecture may be partly revealed. Founded in 1890, *T'oung pao* is thought to be one of the most influential sinological journals in the world. According to its full name, it included the study of History, Languages, Geography, and Ethnography of East Asia. Actually, there were very few published articles on Chinese architecture in the journal, mainly about a single temple or tomb, but when it came to the part of “bulletin critique”, functioning as a form of book review, the editors showed some interest in Chinese architecture.

As one of the founding editors of *T'oung pao*, the Dutch sinologist, Gustaaf Schlegel, was famous for his monograph on the *Heaven and Earth Society* as well as his Dutch-Chinese dictionary, but he still had some interest in Chinese graves and architecture. In 1892 and 1893, he reviewed two books written by Edward S. Morse, *On the Older Forms of Terra-Cotta Roofing Tiles* and *Latrines of the East*. He described the book as “the most common and homely” but still able to “throw an unexpected light upon the history of mankind itself”.<sup>26</sup> And when he reviewed *The Religious System of China* by J.J.M. de Groot in 1898, he showed great enthusiasm towards the chapter of Feng Shui 风水, and discussed it for 6 pages in detail.<sup>27</sup>

After 1900, there were plenty of published monographs on Chinese art and architecture, and the then editor Edouard Chavannes seemed to never miss any of them. From Stephen W. Bushell's *Chinese Art*, Combaz's two books on imperial architecture, Oskar Münsterberg's *Chinesische Kunstgeschichte*, to most of Boerschmann's publications, Chavannes exhibited his skills as a sinologist, representing at the time the high standards prevalent in academia regarding Sinology. For example, when he reviewed Combaz's *Les palais impériaux de la chine* in 1909, he showed his surprise at “the poverty of our information on Chinese architecture”.<sup>28</sup> But after reviewing Boerschmann's *die Baukunst und religiöse kultur der chinesen* in 1911,<sup>29</sup> he reviewed Combaz's 1913 work *Les temples impériaux de la Chine* by comparing it with Boerschmann's book, and criticized Combaz for not having been in China and not reading Chinese directly, before nevertheless showing his appreciation.<sup>30</sup> And in reviewing *Chinesische Dachformen* by Friedrich Mahlke in the same journal, Chavannes already resembled a specialized

<sup>24</sup> Kern (1998), p. 508.

<sup>25</sup> Hoster (2004), p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Schlegel (1892), p. 442. Translated by the author.

<sup>27</sup> Schlegel (1898), pp. 65–78. Translated by the author.

<sup>28</sup> Chavannes (1909), p. 388. Translated by the author.

<sup>29</sup> Kögel (2015), p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> Chavannes (1913), p. 309. Translated by the author.

Chinese architectural historian when referring to the opinion of Fergusson about the roofs in Chinese architecture.<sup>31</sup> These examples demonstrate the progressive academic acknowledgement of Chinese architecture within the field of Sinology.

In the period of Paul Pelliot, namely the 1920s and 1930s, there were more rubrics in the journal providing book reviews other than the “bulletin critique”, such as: “revue des periodiques”, “bibliographie” and “livres reçus”. Compared with Chavannes, Pelliot seemed more concerned with the field of Art History as a “Tunhuangologist”. Despite reviewing Boerschmann and Siren’s works, he introduced the work *Chinese Art*<sup>32</sup> edited by *Burlington Magazine* in 1925 for as long as 24 pages, and in the beginning, he claimed that Chinese art was then fashionable, but the study methods were insufficient, and criticized the lack of illustrations in the previously-published Bushell’s *Chinese Art* and Münsterberg’s *Chinesische Kunstgeschichte* when compared to the new *Chinese Art*. Before going into each chapter, Pelliot expressed how he felt encouraged by the state of Chinese art studies, inspired by the great work done at the time.<sup>33</sup> Pelliot was also well-known among Chinese-born architectural historians of China because of his discussions with the famous architectural historian Liang Sicheng 梁思成. He provided to Liang Sicheng through private correspondence not only the details of murals in the grottoes of Dunhuang, or the photographs of an ancient portico of the grotto dating back to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century in his monograph *Les Grottes de Touen-houang*, but also the clues for estimating the portico’s age, which became the origin for the image of “Tang-style architecture”.<sup>34</sup>

From personal interest to professional discussion with scholars, the editors of sinological journals were supposed to be amateur Chinese architecture scholars, which is due to the fact that the editors had to be quite aware of research trends in related fields. The most active scholars, such as Boerschmann, Ecke and Sirén, played influential roles in the process whereby the study of Chinese architecture gradually became a “notable doctrine” among Western researchers, and which also resulted in the formation of the Society for the Study of Chinese Architecture.

## 4 Conclusion

In this article, the study of Chinese architecture by foreign scholars was divided into four phases. Before 1840, there had been a long history of imagining about China, with exaggerated words and distorted images varying along with the political or artistic changes of the Western world. These misunderstandings continued until the 1870s, despite the fact that some scholars had already been able to enter the country. Not much documentation had been accumulated on Chinese architecture in those days, other than a few basic descriptions and photos, which also led to some negative judgments among foreign Chinese architecture scholars. After the 1870s, the interests of Westerners were aroused as the country opened to foreign exchanges. In order to develop colonial

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 302–303.

<sup>32</sup> The full name is *Chinese Art, an introductory review of painting, ceramics, textiles, bronzes, sculpture, jade, etc.*

<sup>33</sup> Pelliot (1927), pp. 110–134.

<sup>34</sup> Ding (2013), pp. 1–9.

territories and explore the continent's resources to alleviate economic pressures in the Western empires, specialists were sent to China in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, followed by the explorations of orientalist, sinologists, art historians and architects in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In this way, Chinese architecture started to be examined and documented carefully, finally addressing Fergusson's laments. The study of published periodicals in the field of Sinology not only reveals a concordance with the aforementioned 4-phase division, but also provides a closer look to the process whereby Chinese architecture studies gradually became a "notable doctrine" among Western researchers, and what the research circumstances of Chinese architecture really looked like among sinologists in the years before the war.

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