

This book is mandatory reading for researchers of the Han dynasty; but it will also be stimulating for anyone interested in original approaches to ancient history. *Savage Exchange* is certainly one of the best examples of what interdisciplinarity can bring to our knowledge of ancient periods for which data are scattered – too scattered to be interpreted in themselves and according to traditional disciplinary divisions.

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PAUL W. KROLL:

*A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese.*

(Handbook of Oriental Studies.) xvi, 714 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015. €199. ISBN 978 90 04 28411 1.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X15000518

Learning to read texts written in the Chinese of the pre-imperial period on to the end of the Tang has been an essential part of the curriculum of any undergraduate degree aiming at an appreciation of the vast riches of the Chinese cultural tradition – or, more simply, any degree concerning China that does not sell the student short. Yet for generations Anglophone students have not been well served by the lexicographic resources placed at their disposal. All teachers were obliged to issue warnings about reliance on the 1931 dictionary of R.H. Mathews, which addressed the linguistic change of its day by mixing the latest neologisms with phrases from high antiquity without any marking of the difference. One of my lecturers, we were told, had actually hurled a copy of this unsatisfactory tome out of the classroom window – a story that I was disposed to believe was fictional until I met the former student whose copy it was. Instead we were instructed to consult for early works the 1957 *Grammata Serica Recensa* of Bernhard Karlgren, an elementary glossary added to a study of early written forms that lacked even an adequate index before one was privately published in 1974.

No one is going to throw “Kroll” out of the window. Though the aims of this work are modest, based on single characters rather than compound expressions, it is much more than a mere glossary. Early and medieval meanings are clearly distinguished, and even the medieval pronunciation is indicated, using William Baxter’s representation of the system, as the helpful and eminently practical introduction states (p. xiii) – a precise online reference would have been yet more helpful, but most students today will surely waste little time in locating the Wikipedia entry on “Baxter’s transcriptions for Middle Chinese” and thus swiftly find reassurance that final X and H only mark tonal features. Better still, Buddhist meanings and transcriptional uses are given, allowing the student to appreciate that these features are integral to the written language of the period, rather than deriving some obscure special interest of the more Indologically minded denizens of the medieval Chinese world.

One does not expect a student dictionary to be comprehensive, but since there were points in my own education when I was assured that “you will not find this meaning in dictionaries” I did check the one or two that I could recollect. The meaning of *de* 德 that occurs in the biography of Xiang Yu 項羽 in the *Shi Ji* when, facing death, he decides to give away his horse to someone “as a favour” is perhaps covered here, though the words “kindness” and so forth listed in the entry (p. 80) do not make entirely clear that the meanings “a kind deed” and the like can occur. In a different category would be the usage of *gu* 故 in Buddhist scholastic prose to mark

the end of a statement and affirm that it is so, a somewhat untranslatable particle that (I was told) reflects the Sanskrit *iti*. This usage, which the unwary often take to be a connective word introducing the next sentence, is not listed, no doubt on the assumption that most tyros will steer clear of solid Buddhist doctrine. I cannot help feeling, however, that it deserves a place in some basic work of reference and not just in oral tradition. But there is plenty already here to gladden the heart: among the many concise and elegant definitions it was gratifying to find one covering the collocation 𠄎 *zha* A 𠄎 *zha* B, “no sooner A than B”, since Mathews among others makes no mention of this, and I have noticed that even experienced translators sometimes fumble it.

On top of all this, many helpful aids may be found appended to the main dictionary, such as the expected and indispensable presentation of calendrical terminology, and less predictably but most usefully the entire set of the sixty hexagrams of the *Yi Jing*. The sequence of reign names only runs to the end of the Tang dynasty, but reflects Paul Kroll’s admirable precision in such matters: exact dates in the Chinese and Western calendars are given for the start of each, and regimes like those of Wang Mang and the Empress Wu are clearly marked rather than subsumed under the names of the dynasties they replaced for what turned out to be the (relatively) short term. The transient regimes that sprang up in the fourth century and succeeded each other in rapid succession into the fifth are not given space, though unfortunately periods of political chaos are not necessarily to be ignored in the Chinese past, so perhaps a separate set of tables might have been provided.

On the other hand, of course, the need to keep the dictionary to a reasonable size and price is understandable – maybe there is room once the success of this work has been established for some entrepreneur to produce a “Companion to Kroll”. Only in one respect might the need for such supplementary aids be a little more urgent. There is no listing at the very end, as in Mathews, for “characters having obscure radicals”, no doubt on the assumption that looking up *xiang* 相 in what the beginner expects to be the most obvious place to no avail will soon inculcate the need to be a little more suspicious. Even so, the production of a list of such characters keyed to this work based on that provided by Mathews, or even on more modern pedagogy, might be worth producing in due course. For assuredly the volume under review is not simply one that will be safe from defenestration; rather, one can safely predict that it will become a firm favourite of future generations. The compiler, and the colleagues whose help he generously acknowledges on the title page, are to be congratulated on a major step forward in the practical lexicography of the written language of the Chinese tradition in one of its most beautiful, challenging – and still current – forms.

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KYLE STEINKE with DORA C.Y. CHING (eds):

*Art and Archaeology of the Erligang Civilization.*

(Publications of the Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.) 238 pp. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. ISBN 978 0 691 15994 2.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X15000671

This is the first English-language book fully devoted to the Erligang Civilization. In the words of Steinke’s preface, it aims “to bring the Erligang civilization to the