

# **The English Translation System and Construction of Chinese Classics in the Western World: Taking the English Translation of the Shangshu as an Example**

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**Abstract:** From the 19th century to the turn of the 20th century, influenced by scientific positivism, traditional Sinology in the Western world gradually modernized, and the English translation system also showed a trend of diversification. During this period, Chinese classics were translated into English and spread to the West. As one of the "Five Classics" in China, "Shangshu" has important historical significance and ideological value. Therefore, its English translations are widely disseminated in the Western world. With the continuous development of Western Sinology, the English translations of "Shangshu" exhibited diverse characteristics. The translations by British astrologer Walter Gom Old and Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren were particularly prominent. Old mainly adopted a free translation strategy, which focused on transforming the meaning, spirit, and tone of the original text into a more free and fluent way of expression. This made the content of the book more easily accepted by readers, while maintaining the clarity and high consistency of the translation. Bernhard Karlgren tended to prefer literal translation, with a concise and straightforward translation style that adopted a word for word translation approach rather than literary translation. They each had their own strengths in translation, providing rich ideas for Western Sinology translation and making important contributions to the modernization of Western Sinology.

**Keywords:** Chinese Classics; The Western World; English Translation System; Shangshu; Old: Bernhard Karlgren

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The study of the English translation system and construction of Chinese classics in the Western world has always been an important topic in the field of Sinology. The translation of ancient books is not only the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese culture, but also a bridge for cultural exchange and understanding between the East and the West

(Piyawat & Ren, 2021). As an important component of Confucian classics, the English translation of "Shangshu" is crucial in promoting Chinese culture towards the world (Hsia, 2010; Zhenzhong, 2014). "Shangshu" gathers wisdom from various aspects such as ancient Chinese politics, philosophy, and history, and its English translation work places extremely high demands on translators (Hongli et al., 2024; Lavelle, 2015). Translators not only need to have a profound language foundation and superb translation skills, but also need to have a deep understanding and comprehension of Chinese culture (Li, 2017). In English translation, the translator needs to accurately convey the meaning of the original text while taking into account the cultural background and reading habits of Western readers, which is undoubtedly a highly challenging task (Holmes, 2011). Since the 19th century, with the rise of Western Sinology, more and more scholars have devoted themselves to the study of the English translation of "Shangshu". The translated works of scholars not only enrich the theoretical system of Western Sinology, but also facilitate Western readers to understand Chinese culture (Chen, 2020; Xiaodun & Schoenberger, 2019). However, due to differences in history, culture, language, and other aspects, there are still certain differences in the translation quality and dissemination effect of these English translated works (Huang, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to systematically sort out and analyze the English translation system of "Shangshu" in the Western world, and deeply explore its construction characteristics. It is hoped to provide strong theoretical support and practical guidance for promoting the English translation of Chinese classics in the Western world through this research. It is hoped to further promote the exchange and integration of Eastern and Western cultures, so that the charm of Chinese culture can be fully demonstrated on a global scale.

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN SINOLOGY AND THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF "SHANGSHU"

### 2.1 Analysis of the Development History and Early Dilemmas of Western Sinology

The development of Western Sinology deeply reflects the dissemination and integration of Chinese culture into the Western world. During this process, Westerners gradually went from initial exploration and understanding to systematic research and ultimately reached a profound

reflection on Chinese culture (Honey, 1994; Wright, 1998). Although there are various views in the academic community on the stage division of the development of Western Sinology, the 19th century is undoubtedly a key turning point among them. Compared to the mixed state of missionary practice and Sinology research in the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as the ambiguity of disciplinary classification, Western Sinology showed a clearer disciplinary direction and professionalism during this period. From the late 18th century to the early 19th century, Western Sinology gradually entered a mature stage, ushering in a new era of systematic and specialized discipline construction, marking its important development and progress in the academic field (Chiang, 1974). The notable sign of this period is the emergence of a large number of lectures, societies, and research journals on Sinology. For example, France established the Asian Society in 1822 and launched its publication, the Asian Magazine. The UK followed closely and established the Royal Society for Asia of Great Britain and Ireland the following year. In addition, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge also established lectures on Sinology in 1876 and 1888, respectively. At the same time, Germany established a Chinese language teaching seat at the Berlin Oriental Language Institute in 1877. This series of events not only highlights the flourishing development of Western Sinology, but also signifies the increasing influence of Chinese culture in the Western academic community, laying a solid foundation for subsequent Sinology research. Despite the strong development of Western Sinology in the 19th century, which presented a diversified research pattern, it faced significant challenges in its early stages due to the scarcity of literature and materials (Kern, 1998). This challenge led to misunderstandings and biases in the study of Chinese history and culture in Europe at that time, with Hegel's theory of "China without history" being a typical representative. Taking France as an example, as one of the earliest European continental countries to establish cultural ties with China, French sinologists limited their research to abstract levels due to a lack of original literature. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Jesuits introduced a certain number of ancient Chinese books into Europe through translation, commentary, and letters. But these materials were no longer sufficient in quantity and quality to meet the rapid development needs of Sinology in the 19th century. Therefore, the study of Sinology in 19th century Europe urgently needed more Chinese literature as support. In this context, Western scholars deeply recognized the crucial significance of translating Chinese literature, especially classic ancient books, for the study of Sinology at that time

(Richter, 2016). Some Western scholars attached great importance to the translation and introduction of Chinese classics. During this period, a large number of related translated works emerged, such as the "Notes on Chinese Literature" written by British missionary William Yali. The preface of this work was based on the classification of "Jing", "Shi", and "Zi" in Sinology, and the translation achievements of Chinese classics were listed by the West at that time (Linder, 2003). This detailed listing not only reflects the phased development achievements of early 19th century European sinology research, but also highlights the favorable prerequisites for the dissemination of Chinese classics to the West. At the same time, these Chinese classics that were introduced to Europe also provided indispensable literature resources for the in-depth development of Sinology research in Europe at that time. The interaction and integration between the two jointly promoted the development of Western Sinology, demonstrating the two-way interactive value of academic exchange and cultural dissemination.

## 2.2 The Historical Context of Old and Bernhard Karlgren's English Translation of Shangshu

In 1864, Walter Gom Old was born in Birmingham, England. Born into a wealthy family, he provided excellent conditions for him to receive comprehensive classical education. Old had a strong interest in mysticism since childhood and embarked on an exploration journey in astrology at the age of 15, extensively exploring various literature related to astrology. Old also deeply loved Eastern literature, studying everything from hieroglyphs to Sanskrit and Chinese. After graduating from university, Old briefly worked as a chemist's assistant, while also using his spare time to study medicine and pharmacy knowledge. During this period, Old's research on astrology and mystical texts did not stagnate, but rather deepened. In 1875, Helena Bravatsky co-founded the Theological Association with Henry Steyr Alcott and others. Bravatsky proposed that by integrating theology with the profound theories of Hermism, a revival phenomenon known as "ancient wisdom" can be revealed. This wisdom is seen as a common element that forms the foundation of religious beliefs around the world. Old was deeply influenced by it, which provided an important historical context for his future efforts to translate the Eastern classic "Shangshu". Old's research is extensive, involving not only astrology but also Eastern culture. Although Old translated fewer Eastern works, his emphasis on meeting the understanding and acceptance needs of secular

readers when translating the classic literature "Shangshu" made this translation highly sought after (Kwong, 2003). Compared with missionaries such as Madus and Jacob in China, Old's translation has many shortcomings in terms of accuracy in semantic interpretation. This not only reflects the challenges faced by Old as a Western scholar in translating Eastern classics, but also reveals the complex historical context of cultural exchange and collision between the East and the West at that time. The 20th century was a critical period for the modernization of Sinology research methods, and the rise of scientific positivism injected new vitality into this process (Zhonggang, 2023). With the prevalence of scientific positivism, empirical research methods were also widely adopted in the field of Sinology, such as epitaphy, anthropology, sociology, etc. (Rošker, 2021). These methods break through the traditional research paradigm of Sinology, which is mainly based on philology, and provide new avenues for in-depth exploration of classical Chinese literature. In this context, Western sinologists such as Bernhard Karlgren applied new research methods to the study of Chinese classical literature and achieved significant results (Shovkovyi et al., 2023). Bernhard Karlgren was born in the province of Yenselping, Sweden. His father was a high school teacher with rich teaching abilities and profound linguistic knowledge, which had a profound impact on Bernhard Karlgren's academic development. In addition, teachers such as Karl Libby and Walter Fischer also played an important role in promoting Bernhard Karlgren's academic growth. As a primary school Mandarin and German teacher for Bernhard Karlgren, Liebi not only possessed the qualifications of a language teacher, but also actively participated in linguistic research and publishing work. He provided valuable academic resources and guidance to Bernhard Karlgren. Fisher was Bernhard Karlgren's Mandarin teacher throughout his high school years. He co-authored "Integrated Examples of Common Sentence Construction and Punctuation Use" with Lebi, which had a profound impact on the Mandarin use of young Swedish students. In Bernhard Karlgren's academic career, his English translation of "Shangshu" has significant historical significance. This work is not only one of the important achievements of Bernhard Karlgren's Sinology research, but also reflects the historical context of cultural exchange and collision between the East and the West at that time. Against the backdrop of the challenge of Western centrism and the transformation of traditional Chinese culture, Bernhard Karlgren successfully presented the ancient Chinese cultural classic "Shangshu" to Western readers through his profound academic

foundation and keen insight.

### 3. CHARACTERISTICS AND STRATEGIES OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION SYSTEM OF SHANGSHU IN THE WESTERN WORLD

#### 3.1 The Interpretation Characteristics of Old and Bernhard Karlgren's English Translation of "Shangshu"

From the perspective of ontological hermeneutics, both Old and Bernhard Karlgren's interpretations of "Shangshu" shed the obvious Christian theological color in previous translations (Dahlstrom, 2010; Palmer, 1969). However, in the interpretation of the original text, there are significant differences between the two at the linguistic level. There is a significant deviation in Old's translation in conveying the semantics of the original text of Shangshu. In contrast, although there are some inappropriate interpretations in Bernhard Karlgren's translation, the overall semantics of its English translation are closer to the original text. Old's English translation of "Shangshu" shares some similarities with the English translation during the formation period of Sinology, that is, both do not include the original text, and Chinese characters are not included in the annotations. In terms of translation methods, Old mainly adopted free translation, which led to inconsistency between his translated works and the original Chinese text in terms of word history and cultural knowledge. Compared with the English translations of Maddox and Jacob, Old's translation was slightly less accurate and academic. There is a saying in "Shangshu": 宾于四门, 四门穆穆, 纳于大麓, 烈风雷雨弗迷. This sentence describes the scene of Shun welcoming guests at the four gates of the Mingtang and his resilience as a mountain and forest official. However, Old's translation has several significant deviations when dealing with this paragraph. Firstly, the term "穆穆" expresses a solemn and respectful demeanor in the original text. However, in Old's translation, it is simply translated as "socially disposed", which does not accurately convey the emphasis on solemn demeanor in the original text. Secondly, "麓" is an ancient official name that refers to officials guarding mountains and forests, which is misunderstood as "the Great Mountains foot" in Old's translation, which completely deviates from the original meaning. Furthermore, for the translation of the original text "烈风雷雨弗迷", Old treated it as "terrific tempests and thunder-storms not withstanding". Although this expresses

the harsh environment of wind, rain, and lightning, it does not reflect the unwavering quality of Shun in such an environment, which is the meaning of "弗迷". Therefore, Old's translation has obvious shortcomings in understanding the lexical meaning and cultural background of the original text, resulting in significant differences in semantics and cultural connotations between the translation and the original text. This also reflects the importance of a deep understanding and accurate translation of the original text when translating classical literature. Compared to Old's English translation interpretation characteristics, Bernhard Karlgren's translation scope is more limited, focusing only on the current text "Shangshu". Bernhard Karlgren adopts the research method of historical comparative linguistics and conducts empirical research on the original words based on his own constructed ancient Chinese phonetic system (Orlandi, 2018). Therefore, Bernhard Karlgren's translated works are often considered to be able to more accurately showcase the original language style of these scriptures due to their rigorous academic attitude. The language science research method adopted by Bernhard Karlgren is different from the traditional methods of language and literature such as James Legge. Bernhard Karlgren believed that some obscure language in the original text can be interpreted multiple times. In the translation, variants of relevant words and additional annotations from ancient scholars were annotated (Wang et al., 2021). For example, when Bernhard Karlgren translated the sentence "慎徽五典, 五典克从" in "Shangshu", he extensively collected historical use cases and annotations of words, explained the meaning of "五典" in detail, and pointed out its relationship with family relationships. However, Bernhard Karlgren's translation also showed a tendency to focus too much on the meaning of words and neglect the historical and cultural context, which led to some semantic misunderstandings. For example, when translating the sentence "宾于四门, 四门穆穆, 纳于大麓, 烈风雷雨弗迷" in the "Book of Yu Xia · Shun Dian", he failed to accurately interpret the deep meanings of "宾于四门", "四门穆穆", and "纳于大麓". Instead, he translated literally, which was inconsistent with the historical and cultural context of the original text. Overall, Bernhard Karlgren's interpretation of the original text of "Shangshu" at the ideological and cultural level is still insufficient. But its use of modern linguistic research methods can effectively break through the constraints of traditional research. This makes its English translation

closer to the original text at the language level compared to previous translations, while also demonstrating higher academic value.

### 3.2 Old's English Translation System and Strategies

Old's translation inherits the thick translation style of Madus and Leeds, but Old has different handling of annotations. Old did not use the footnotes commonly used by Madus and Leeds, but instead chose to include relevant annotations uniformly after the entire translation (Yang, 1992). For example, when translating the phrase "帝初于历山, 往于田" in "Shangshu", Old and Madus both clarified the current geographical location of the relevant place names during the translation process. However, in terms of annotation processing, the two exhibit different strategies. Madus not only uses Chinese place names, but also provides a detailed introduction to the geographical information of Lishan in Hedong District, Hezhong County, providing readers with rich background knowledge. Old chose to use transliteration of place names and only briefly explained the current meaning of place names, which is a more concise and clear approach. The different annotation strategies of the two reflect their different focuses and considerations in the translation process. For example, when translating the sentence "女于时, 观厥刑于二女" in "Shangshu", Old used "attach" to translate "女", which is not semantically as close to the original text as Madus's "Marry". In terms of annotations, Old mentioned Cai Shen's interpretation of the names of his two daughters. However, Madus's annotations were more detailed, not only mentioning the names of his daughters and the purpose for which they were sent, but also citing Zhuangzi's viewpoint, emphasizing the importance of natural and private interactions between couples in judging a person's governance ability. Overall, Old's annotations are relatively simple, with a different level of detail compared to Madus and Leeds, which also makes its translation present a different style of annotations compared to previous translators. Compared to the translations of Madus and Leeds, Old's translation clearly shows a preference for free translation and adopts a domestication translation strategy. Old also strove to be close to the semantics and form of the original text. But to make the translation more natural and fluent, he did not strictly follow the original text's words, phrases, and word order like Madus did. The translation core advocated by Old is to accurately grasp the tone of the original text and transform it into a more free and fluent form of expression that is easy for the general public to accept. He

emphasized maintaining the clarity and consistency of expression in the translation to ensure its accuracy and readability. Therefore, Old's translation demonstrated higher flexibility while maintaining respect for the literal meaning of the original text. For example, when translating the sentence "疑谋勿成, 百志惟熙" in "Shangshu", Old did not translate it word for word like Madus did. He adopted a sentence structure that was more in line with English expression habits, translating "疑谋勿成" as "Do not effect doubtful plans", making the translation more natural and fluent, while also better conveying the admonitory tone in the original text. Overall, Old's translation emphasizes the fluency and readability of the translation while maintaining respect for the original text, demonstrating the translation characteristics of free translation as the main focus and domestication strategy. This translation method received widespread praise at the time and also reflected Old's in-depth exploration of translation theory and practice. Among the numerous translators in the Western English speaking world today, Old stands out with his unique method of "translation correction". The introduction section of the Old Shangshu translation clearly explains this translation strategy. Firstly, the translators adopt a literal translation method of word for word and sentence for sentence to preserve the basic structure and literal meaning of the original text. Subsequently, the meaning, charm, and tone of the original text are polished to present it in a more free and fluent way. Old's suggestion of "first adopting literal translation word by word and sentence by sentence" reflects the inheritance of Maddox's literal translation philosophy, and may even be a direct reference to Maddox's translation. "Being polished to a more free and fluent wording" is a translation modification of Madus' translation. Although Old did not directly mention Madoff's translation in the introduction, his translation strategy was clearly based on a reflection on Madoff's translation strategy. By revising the translation of Madus, Old's translation is more in line with the reading habits and aesthetic preferences of Western readers in terms of overall expression. The application of this translation strategy not only demonstrates Old's in-depth exploration of translation theory and practice, but also makes a positive contribution to the Western dissemination and acceptance of Shangshu.

### 3.3 Bernhard Karlgren's English Translation System and Strategies

Bernhard Karlgren was deeply influenced by the modern academic trend of the times when translating "Shangshu", especially in the study of the

Chinese language, where he used the scientific method of positivism. Before starting to translate "Shangshu", Bernhard Karlgren conducted a detailed data collection work, comprehensively collecting literature materials related to "Shangshu" from various periods. On this basis, Bernhard Karlgren comprehensively applied various research methods such as linguistics and exegesis to analyze these language materials in detail, in order to more accurately grasp the textual connotation and linguistic characteristics of "Shangshu". Bernhard Karlgren pays special attention to the classification, comparison, and textual research of historical materials such as the etymology of difficult words in "Shangshu". His conclusions often focus on the semantics supported by the oldest textual examples. This empirical research method makes the translation more scientific and the semantics of the translation closer to the original text. Therefore, when translating "Shangshu", Bernhard Karlgren first conducted a detailed analysis of the original text word by word, then carefully examined the usage and meaning of each word, and comprehensively considered the context. Through this translation form, the understanding of the original text is deepened and more comprehensive. Overall, Bernhard Karlgren adopted the positivist scientific method of modern academic thought when translating "Shangshu", which makes his translation more scientific and academic. His research method not only improved the accuracy of the translation, but also provided useful references for later researchers. Bernhard Karlgren and Madus are both committed to the research of compiling Chinese dictionaries. They also demonstrated a concise style based on literal translation of the original words in the English translation of "Shangshu". Especially, Bernhard Karlgren demonstrated his unique translation style when translating text, which is a literal translation method based on the original text words (Gibbs Jr, 1984). The characteristic of this method is that it almost translates the original text word for word, making the translation concise and close to the semantics of the original text. For example, Bernhard Karlgren translated the phrase "箕子乃言曰：‘我闻在昔’" from "Shangshu" as "The prince of Ki spoke and said: 'I have heard that in ancient times'". This translation method not only retains the structure and vocabulary of the original text, but also accurately conveys the meaning of the original text. Similarly, Bernhard Karlgren used similar translation methods for expressions such as "禹敷土" and "随山刊木", making the translation both faithful to the original text and easy to understand. Overall, Bernhard Karlgren's translation exhibits obvious

characteristics of literal translation. He successfully preserved the semantics and style of the original text through word for word translation, making the translation both academic and easy for readers to accept. This translation method not only demonstrates Bernhard Karlgren's deep understanding of the original text, but also reflects his rigor and seriousness in translation work. From the interpretation and interpretation of "Shangshu", Madus and Leeds both consider it a classic work rich in profound Chinese history and culture (Yao & Wu, 2016). In contrast, Gao regarded it as an ordinary ancient language research corpus, and its translation mainly focused on the annotation research of difficult words and phrases. Although Gao also used a translation strategy similar to Madus and Leeds to annotate relevant words in the original text, there are significant differences in the way and purpose of annotation compared to the previous two (Qi et al., 2024). Firstly, Bernhard Karlgren's annotations are presented in an independent volume format and are not directly attached to the translation. This arrangement makes their annotation work more systematic and professional. Secondly, in terms of annotation content, Bernhard Karlgren mainly focuses on scientific research on the meaning of words, highlighting the importance of language ontology research. Taking the "凤凰来仪" in Gao's translation of "Shangshu" as an example, Bernhard Karlgren extensively collected relevant intertextual materials. He used various methods such as comparative linguistics, philology, and scientific positivism to classify and compare the different interpretations of the word "仪" in detail. This empirical research method makes Gao's annotations more scientific and accurate.

#### 4. THE CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL VALUE OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION SYSTEM OF "SHANGSHU" IN THE WESTERN WORLD

##### 4.1 Enriching the Translation Ideas of Western Sinology

From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, British Sinology entered a critical period of development, and the group of scholars involved in the translation and research of Chinese classics became increasingly diverse. In addition to missionaries, secular scholars such as astrologer Old also actively engaged in this field and conducted English translations of classics such as Shangshu. Old's English translation inherits the previous heavy translation model with rich annotations and exhibits

unique morphological characteristics. Old's translation and annotations are generally more concise and clear, and his interpretation of the text differs from previous missionary translators. It is worth mentioning that Old's English translation successfully broke free from the Christian theological connotations that have long been embedded in Western Chinese classic translations, making the translation more objective and neutral. This provides Western readers with a more authentic experience of Chinese culture. In addition, Old's English translations showcase China's long history and culture to the Western world, effectively refuting the widespread Western belief that China has no history. His translation is popular and fluent, loved by readers, and has become an important window for the Western world to understand Chinese culture. Therefore, it can be said that Old's English translation of "Shangshu" represented some significant features of the transformation period of Western Sinology. Moreover, he provided rich theoretical and practical materials for the modernization process of Western Sinology, greatly enriching the translation ideas of Western Sinology. In the practice of translating "Shangshu" into English, Bernhard Karlgren's scientific empirical method and unique research ideas had a profound impact and inspiration for subsequent translation research, and laid a solid foundation for the Sinology translation system in the Western world. Bernhard Karlgren's language science research on ancient Chinese classics such as "Shangshu" not only demonstrated profound academic achievements, but also provided valuable theoretical and practical experience for Western modern Sinology research. His student Egroz once praised, "The core ideas and theoretical framework of Bernhard Karlgren have become the starting point of all serious academic research in this discipline, and their position is unshakable. Therefore, Bernhard Karlgren's outstanding contributions in the field of Chinese historical linguistics will be forever recorded in history." In addition, Otto Klinckel, the director of the National Museum of Berlin, also highly praised Bernhard Karlgren's academic achievements: "Although Bernhard Karlgren's research methods are bold and innovative, perhaps not accepted by everyone, every reader can draw rich knowledge from his works and be deeply inspired. Professor Bernhard Karlgren is not only proficient in language, but his ability to control language is unparalleled, and he is also an outstanding text critic. Bernhard Karlgren's ancient Chinese research works demonstrate precise grasp of materials and unique innovative problem-solving methods." These accolades fully highlight Bernhard Karlgren's outstanding achievements in Sinology.

research and his rich contribution to the contemporary cultural value of the English translation system of "Shangshu" in the Western world. In summary, the English translation of "Shangshu" by Old and Bernhard Karlgren undoubtedly left a distinct mark on the transformation period of Western Sinology and provided valuable theoretical and practical resources for the modernization process of Western Sinology. At the same time, the outstanding contributions of the two scholars broadened the translation approach of Western Sinology, highlighted the contemporary cultural value of the English translation system of "Shangshu" in the Western world, and promoted the mutual learning and integration of Eastern and Western cultures.

#### 4.2 Promoting the Modernization of Western Sinology

Although Old's translation of "Shangshu" has many semantic deviations from the original text, Western media still provides great support for it. Some media praised his translation for its easy and understandable expression. For example, in the evaluation of Old's translation in the journal "The Era of Explanation", it was pointed out that "Mr. Old's translation is excellent and widely popular, and it is also extremely easy to read." Meanwhile, the London and China Telecom journal also commented, "Mr. Old has brought us a smooth translation of this ancient classic." These comments reveal that the main reason why Old's translations are popular is that compared to previous translations, they are more approachable to the general public and are simple and easy to understand, which can better meet the reading needs of the public. Because during the translation of Chinese classics by Madus and Leeds, the two scholars tended to attach the original text and add a lot of annotations, making the translation appear heavy. Meanwhile, due to the obvious tendency towards literal translation, the translation lacks fluency, which to some extent affects the reading experience of Western readers. Old's English translation has made significant improvements in these areas. His annotations and translations are generally more concise and clear, which not only enhances the readability of the translation but also wins widespread praise from readers. Therefore, Old's English translation plays a positive role in promoting cultural exchange between the East and the West. In addition, Old and Gao's participation in the English translation of Chinese classics also breaks the previous situation where missionary translators are the main focus in translation research, injecting new vitality into cultural exchanges between China and the West. Bernhard Karlgren

made significant breakthroughs in Sinology research, successfully promoting the modernization of Sinology research methods. Traditional sinology research mainly relied on linguistic and literary methods. However, in Gao's research, due to the influence of scientific positivism, he integrated various research methods such as textual research and modern linguistics in translation. This refreshed many traditional understandings and provided new ideas for Sinology research. The innovation of Gao's translation lies in the clever application of Western historical comparative linguistics methods to the study of ancient Chinese, successfully constructing the phonetic system of ancient Chinese. This system not only provided him with powerful research tools, but also made many breakthrough academic achievements in the identification and verification of ancient Chinese classics, word annotations, and translation research. These achievements had a profound impact on Western Sinology and academic research in China at that time.

In translating the ancient Chinese classic "Shangshu", Gao adopted modern scientific research methods, which made his interpretation of the original text more accurate overall and had significant academic significance. Therefore, Bernhard Karlgren's English translation of "Shangshu" was hailed as the only translation with academic interest and received high praise from the academic community. Gao's research methods and achievements not only promote the modernization process of Sinology research, but also provide strong support for cultural exchange between China and the West. In summary, both Old and Bernhard Karlgren's methods in translating Shangshu into English exhibit significant modern academic characteristics. Their English translation practice not only reflects a breakthrough and innovation in traditional Sinology research, but also effectively promotes the modernization of Western Sinology, building an important bridge for cultural exchange and academic dialogue between China and the West.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As the source of Chinese civilization, "Shangshu" embodies the rich cultural genes of the Chinese nation, bringing together numerous important ideas, theories, concepts, and viewpoints. Therefore, it is hailed as the source of historical books by later generations. A thorough analysis of the translated works of Old and Bernhard Karlgren's "Shangshu" revealed that their English translation systems not only enrich the

translation ideas of Western Sinology, but also highlighted their cultural value in contemporary times. Old's translation was fluent and popular, deeply loved by readers, opening an important window for the Western world to understand Chinese culture. Bernhard Karlgren accurately interpreted the original work and combines modern scientific methods. His English translation practice not only demonstrated a breakthrough and innovation in traditional Sinology research, but also deeply promoted the modernization process of Western Sinology. The translations of both scholars received widespread praise in the academic community, providing strong support for the Western world's in-depth understanding of Shangshu and giving Western readers a more comprehensive and profound understanding of Chinese culture. Although "Shangshu" has important research value as the source of Chinese civilization, relying solely on this classic as a case study may not fully reflect the English translation system and construction of Chinese classics in the Western world. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of this field, future research can consider incorporating more representative Chinese classics to comprehensively analyze the English translation system and construction of Chinese classics in the Western world.

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