



**HAL**  
open science

## Pre-modern Korean Studies in France: history, objectives, and projects

Isabelle Sancho

### ► To cite this version:

Isabelle Sancho. Pre-modern Korean Studies in France: history, objectives, and projects.  
60 , SungKyunKwan University, Academy of East Asian Studies, Jan 2018, Seoul, South Korea.  
hal-02905290

**HAL Id: hal-02905290**

**<https://hal.science/hal-02905290>**

Submitted on 23 Jul 2020

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# 성균관대 대동문화연구원 개원 60 주년기념 학술대회

January the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
SungKyunKwan University  
Academy of East Asian Studies

## "Pre-modern Korean Studies in France: history, objectives, and projects."

Isabelle SANCHO<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract :

What might be called “pre-modern” Korean studies today are about a century old in France. They started almost by accident at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when missionaries, diplomats, and orientalist were dispatched to Chosŏn Korea at the time of the European expansionist policy in East Asia. Some initiatives taken by a handful of individuals to raise awareness of Korea in France (especially Maurice Courant) have produced unexpected scholarly achievements that have been only recently acknowledged. After World War II, Korean studies in France have been progressively institutionalized in universities and higher education institutions (Paris Diderot, INALCO, EHESS, EFEO, Collège de France) with the help of specialists of close areas. The first generation of French pre-modernists have played a crucial role in building up the field of Korean studies in France (Li Ogg, Daniel Bouchez, Marc Orange). Today, pre-modern Korean studies is a strong subfield within the field of Korean studies in France. French pre-modernists (Elisabeth Chabanol, Kim Daeyeol, Yannick Bruneton, Isabelle Sancho, Pierre-Emmanuel Roux), who are holding key positions in academic institutions, networks, and structures, are very active in France and abroad. They maintain the community of Korean studies in France and develop their visibility abroad in cooperation with specialists of modern and contemporary Korea. However, despite

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Isabelle Sancho is a permanent researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research in France (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* CNRS ; 프랑스국립과학연구센터). From September 2013 to December 2017 she has been acting, at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* EHESS ; 사회과학고등연구원), as the Director of the Research Center on Korea (*Centre de Recherches sur la Corée* CRC ; 한국학연구센터) and Deputy director of the joint research unit 8173 “China, Korea, Japan” (unité mixte de recherche UMR 8173 “Chine, Corée, Japon”).

their importance in academic structures and activities, French pre-modernists have to face several challenges, in a difficult context combining the massification of undergraduate students population following the newly acquired attractiveness of Korean culture in France on the one hand, and large-scale reforms of French higher education and research sector on the other hand. Their most urgent task is to produce teaching and research materials for students, colleagues, and general audience. By training the next generation and developing both the knowledge and interest for pre-modern Korea, they must try to establish in the future long-lasting foundations for their specialty that has still to be built properly, while contributing to the further development of Korean studies in general.



Korean studies in France have been progressively implemented from the 1950's onwards in French universities and other higher education institutions. But the first French studies about Korea appeared more than fifty years earlier, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time when the European powers were conducting their expansionist policy in East Asia, French missionaries, diplomats, and orientalists were dispatched to Chosŏn Korea, a country still little known in France. Isolated initiatives taken by some of them to create awareness about Chosŏn Korea in France produced unexpected scholarly achievements. These studies and materials might be labelled nowadays as "pre-modern" studies, since they were mostly focusing on the history, culture, and language from the last Korean dynasty, which is usually considered, taken as a whole, as the "pre-modern period" according to the common periodization of Korean history. Missionaries, diplomats, and ethnographers who were in some cases interpreters, orientalists, art collectors, and bibliophiles were all contemporary observers of Chosŏn Korea. They were interested in introducing the country in France for different purposes : justification for Catholic proselytism, diplomatic activities, ethnographic interest, orientalist erudition, but also career advancement or even pastime. But after the annexation of Korea by Japan, knowledge about the country was no longer a priority issue for France and Korean studies had to wait the end of World War II to start developing in French academia.

## *French orientalism and Chosŏn Korea at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

France and Korea came into their first contact when the Catholic missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missions Society<sup>2</sup> started to spread from China into the Korean peninsula, which was seen as a true Christian land. The proselyting of these missionaries have caused substantial troubles to Chosŏn Korea but also to the French-Korean diplomatic relationships until the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Yet it must be acknowledged that the first scholarly work in Western language about Korea<sup>4</sup> was achieved by a French priest who had never even set foot on Korea. Following the killing of “the martyrs of Korea” in 1866, Charles Dallet (1829-1878),<sup>5</sup> a zealous missionary, wrote the *History of the Church of Korea*. This work, published in 1874 in two volumes and 1174 pages, was a compilation of the materials gathered by several French priests who served in the peninsula, among whom Antoine Daveluy, apostolic vicar of Korea and martyr.<sup>6</sup> It is a rich historical document providing detailed information about 19<sup>th</sup> century Korea. In particular, the 192-page introduction has attracted the attention of generations of Korea specialists, for it describes in an anthropological way the geography, history, society, political organization, religions, foreign affairs, oral and written languages of the late Chosŏn Korea.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the missionaries, the diplomatic community played a key role in developing French knowledge about Korea. Many members of the French diplomatic corps have studied –in the past but also today– at the *Ecole spéciale des Langues Orientales*<sup>8</sup> that was created

---

<sup>2</sup> *Missions étrangères de Paris* (M.E.P).

<sup>3</sup> A well-known example is the French campaign against Korea in 1866 in Kanghwa island and the seize of precious books among which the Royal Protocols (Uigye 儀軌) from the Outer Kyujanggak Library.

<sup>4</sup> Only one previous work about Korea had been published in Europe at the time. It is Hendrik Hammel’s famous captivity narrative, published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Netherlands and translated into French and, then in English.

<sup>5</sup> Claude-Charles Dallet (1829-1878), from the Paris Foreign Missions Society, spent most of his missionary life in India.

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Marie-Nicolas-Antoine Daveluy (An Toni 安敦伊, 1818-1866) compiled the first Korean-French dictionary (*Hanhanbul sajŏn* 韓漢佛辭典), wrote a *Chronological chart of Korean history* (*Chosŏn yŏndaep’yo* 朝鮮史年代表), and translated several texts related to Korean history into French to be sent to the M.E.P. After his death, all of his writings were sent to the archives of the M.E.P where Dallet would use them.

<sup>7</sup> The introduction was translated in Korean in 1947 and 1966, and the whole work in 1980 by the Institute of the History of Korean Church. Cf. 샤를르 달레 原著, 李能植 · 尹志善 共譯, 朝鮮教會史序說, 大成出版社, 1947. 샤를르 달레 原著, 丁奇洙 譯, 朝鮮教會史序說, 探求堂, 1966. 샤를르 달레 原著, 安應烈 · 崔奭祐 譯註, 韓國天主教會史, 上 · 中 · 下, 분도출판사, 1879-1980.

<sup>8</sup> Since the 1970’s this higher education institution, colloquially referred at as Langues O’, is called INALCO (*Institut des Langues et civilisations orientales* 이날코 동양어문화대).

during the French Revolution in 1795 to train orientalists, interpreters, diplomats, and scholars. One famous graduate of this institution was Victor Collin de Plancy (1853-1923), who graduated in Chinese in 1876 and spent 13 years in Korea. He first went to Korea in 1887 to ratify the “Friendship and Trade agreement” signed in 1886. The year after, he became the Chargé d’affaires in Korea and started collecting about 700 ethnographic objects (including art works and fine porcelains) and rare books until 1891. Collin de Plancy sent several shipments of books to the *Langues Orientales*, building up the first library funds about Korea in France.<sup>9</sup> He also took the initiative to display a Korean pavillon at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1900. All the books presented at the exhibition were donated later to the *Langues Orientales* that had then at its disposal one of the most important collections of Korean books in Europe (630 books, 1400 volumes).

Around the same time, the ethnologist Louis-Charles Varat (1842-1893) arrived in Korea for a fieldwork funded by the French Ministry of Education. With the help of Collin de Plancy he collected various artifacts and books written in *hanmun* and *hangŭl* in Seoul, Pusan, and Taegu that were given in 1893 to the Guimet Museum, which displays Asian arts in Paris. Back to France Varat wrote a 78-page travelogue in 1892 for the journal *Le Tour du monde* that published writings from famous explorers of the time. Varat illustrated his text with a map, more than a hundred drawings picturing people and landscapes of Korea, and 39 drawings by the genre painter Kisan.<sup>10</sup>

The history of the Guimet Museum is also related to French Korean studies because of Hong Chongu (1850-1913).<sup>11</sup> Probably better known as the assassin of the reformist Kim Okkyun (1851-1894), Hong Chongu in his younger days was the first Korean to come to France. He stayed from 1890 to 1893 in Paris and worked at the Museum thanks to the network he could build in the French capital city. He became the first co-translator of Korean literature in Western language. The French translation of the *Ch’unhyang chŏn* signed by J.-H. Rosny (Rosny Junior)<sup>12</sup> and Hong Chongu is also the first translation of an East-Asian literary work in France.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> He sent three successive shipments in 1889, 1890 and 1891.

<sup>10</sup> Kisan 箕山, Kim Chungŭn 金俊根 (dates unknown).

<sup>11</sup> Hong Chongu 洪鍾宇 (1850-1913) assassinated in 1894, one year after leaving France, the reformist Kim Okkyun 金玉均 (1851-1894) in Shanghai, served in the late Chosŏn administration as a reward, and was finally relegated because of his strong anti-Japanese stance before dying unknown.

<sup>12</sup> J.-H. Rosny is a pseudonym used by Joseph Henri Honoré Boex (1856-1940) and his younger brother Séraphin Justin François Boex (1859-1948). They were French authors of Belgian origine who wrote, together or separately, science fiction. *The Quest for Fire* (La guerre du feu), published in 1911, is attributed to J.-H. Rosny but was written by Joseph Boex. After 1908, the two brothers put an end to their collaboration and started to use sometimes two different pen-names : “Rosny Aîné” (Rosny Senior) for Joseph and “Rosny Jeune” (Rosny

### *The particular case of Maurice Courant*

These features of the first French writings about “pre-modern” Korea are worth noticing but not surprising, unlike the particular case of one single individual whose contribution to Korean studies unfortunately gained recognition only belatedly.<sup>14</sup> Maurice Courant (1865-1935), another graduate from the *Langues Orientales* in Chinese who was at first a Chinese interpreter at the French Legation in Beijing, was sent in Korea in 1890 to be Collin de Plancy’s assistant. During the two years he spent in Korea at that time, he had been preparing two monumental and remarkable works that are worth praising until today.

The young Maurice Courant, who was at first bored by his stay in Korea, was given the task by Collin de Plancy and Mgr Mutel, the bishop of Korea, to catalogue all the Korean books known and available. After travelling throughout the Korean peninsula and collecting varied information through research conducted in libraries, bookstores, Buddhist temples, and catalogues with the help of Korean assistants, he achieved the first drafts of the *Korean Bibliography* which was published after he left Korea.<sup>15</sup> The whole work in three volumes lists 3821 books published in Korea from the origins to 1890, most of which are minutely described through bibliographical notices and sometimes illustrations.<sup>16</sup>

During his relatively short stay in Korea in the 1890’s, Courant also took the initiative to write a manuscript in order to compete for an award given by the *Langues Orientales* that

---

Junior) for Séraphin. The French translation of the *Ch’unhyang chôn* was signed J.-H. Rosny but was probably done by Séraphin Boex in cooperation with Hong Chongu.

<sup>13</sup> This translation was published in 1892 in a small book format (7.5 x 13.5 cm) : *Le printemps parfumé*, roman coréen, traduction de J.-H. Rosny [jeune], Petite collection Guillaume, Paris, E. Dentu, 1892. In 1895, after Hong Chongu had left for Korea, a text titled “The dry wood flourished again” (*Le Bois sec refléuri*) was published by the Guimet Museum. That was a French translation of a manuscript attributed to –and probably written by– Hong Chongu from heterogeneous body of Korean historical texts and literary tales, among which the *Tale of Sim Ch’ông* (*Sim Ch’ông chôn* 沈淸傳). Cf. *Le Bois sec refléuri*, traduit par Hong Tjyong-Ou, Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque de vulgarisation, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1895. These two texts, introduced by An Sonjae (Brother Anthony of Taizé), has been published in 2016 by *Atelier des Cahiers*, Collection Seonbi, in collaboration with *sallim* publishing house in South Korea on the occasion of the France-Korea Years 2015-2016

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Daniel Bouchez, “Un défricheur méconnu des études extrême-orientales, Maurice Courant (1865-1935)” (An unrecognized pioneer of Far-Eastern studies, Maurice Courant (1865-1935)), *Journal asiatique*, CCLXXI(1983), Paris, pp.43-150.

<sup>15</sup> *Bibliographie coréenne* (*Han’guk sôji* 韓國書誌). The monumental work was published by the *Ecole des Langues Orientales* at Ernest Leroux publishing house in three volumes from 1894 and 1897 and one Supplement presenting the books published until 1899 was added in 1901. Cf. Maurice Courant, *Bibliographie coréenne. Tableau littéraire de la Corée contenant la nomenclature des ouvrages publiés dans ce pays jusqu’en 1890 ainsi que la description détaillée des principaux d’entre ces ouvrages*, Ernest Leroux, Paris. A Korean translation was achieved in 1994: Lee Heejae (translator), *Han’guk sôji*, Iljogak, Seoul, 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Some books are no longer extant and are only known today thanks to Courant’s work. The general introduction of about a hundred pages, giving an account of Korean culture, is still read by specialists.

might help him obtain an academic position in France. That manuscript, in two volumes and 349 pages with an index, which remained unpublished until 1986,<sup>17</sup> is the *Répertoire historique de l'administration coréenne*.<sup>18</sup> This systematic work presents in an innovative way and consistently translates the administrative structures of the Chosŏn state into French equivalents. It is without precedent in either English or Modern Korean until today and was finally made available in 2017 in both French and Korean open archive platforms.<sup>19</sup>

After several failed attempts to secure an academic position in either Chinese or Japanese in Paris, Courant finally became in 1900 a professor of Chinese at a newly created position at the University of Lyon where he mainly taught Chinese but also Korean culture. Before getting an injury to his right hand in 1910 that prevented him from writing, he left several writings about Korea. For example, he wrote the first travel guide of Korea ever published in the West<sup>20</sup> and authored the 66-page *1900, Souvenir de Séoul, Corée. Le pavillon coréen au Champ de Mars*, which presents the Korean pavilion at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1900 with a rich iconography.<sup>21</sup>

The letters sent by Courant to Collin de Plancy show that, despite his first negative impressions of Korea, Courant definitely fell under the charm of the country, praising its rich history and distinctive culture.<sup>22</sup> If circumstances of the small and great history had been different –especially if Choson state would not have collapsed and Korea would not have

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Daniel Bouchez (ed), fac-simile with a presentation by Bouchez and an index of modernized transcriptions by Min Yŏng-ŭi, *Cahiers d'études coréennes n°3*, Collège de France, Paris, 1986, 436 pages.

<sup>18</sup> *Han'guk yŏktae haengjŏng-kwanjik ch'ongnam* 한국 역대 행정-관직 총람.

<sup>19</sup> Only a fac-simile of the manuscript was published by Daniel Bouchez at the Collège de France in 1986. Considering the importance of the work, the Center for Korean Studies at EHESS made efforts to transform that edited manuscript into a searchable document, available for the academic community. In 2007 Alain Delissen, the director of the CKS, charged Pierre-Emmanuel Roux with typing the whole document in a Word document that could be made available on-line and with adding Modern Korean transcriptions and a few commentaries. In 2015, as the director of the CKS, Isabelle Sancho supported Eun-joo Carré-Na, the research engineer of the CKS, to apply for funding to the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) in order to digitalize the manuscript and add three different indexes. Courant's *Répertoire historique de l'administration coréenne* has been made available in both French and Korean open archive platforms (HAL and AKS) in 2017 : <http://maurice-courant.huma-num.fr/repertoire/index.html> and <http://dh.aks.ac.kr/MauriceCourant/repertoire/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Maurice Courant, *La Corée*, in Claudius Madrolle (ed.), *Chine du Nord et de l'Ouest, Corée, le transsibérien*, Guide Madrolle, Comité de l'Asie Française, Paris, 1904.

<sup>21</sup> This work was published in a trilingual edition (English, French, Korean) in Seoul in 2010. Cf. 모리스 쿠랑의 서울의 추억, 서울역사 박물관조사 연구과, 2010, 127 pages. This work was published in Korea thanks to the efforts of the Seoul Museum of History and Elisabeth Chabanol, the head of the Seoul Centre of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO ; 프랑스국립극동연구원).

<sup>22</sup> A recent work published in cooperation between the Institut d'études coréennes (IEC) of the Collège de France and the University of Pusan presents the correspondance. Cf. Maurice Courant, *Une amitié pour la Corée. « Cher Monsieur Collin de Plancy »* (A friendship for Korea. "Dear Mister Collin de Plancy"), *Kalp'i 2*, 2017, 274 pages. The long and well-documented article about Courant by Bouchez (see above note 14) has been republished in this volume.

become a Japanese colony– Courant would probably have tried to grant Korea the status of a proper academic field in France in the early 20th century. In that case, pre-modern Korean studies might have developed in France one century earlier and in a easier way.

### *The first specialists of pre-modern Korea as pioneers of Korean studies in France*

The creation of Korean studies in France have been made possible thanks to a specialist of Japan, the ethnologist and linguist Charles Hagenauer (1896-1976), who has been teaching partially Korean language and culture in Paris, as Courant did in Lyon, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> In 1956 Hagenauer hired one Korean lecturer, Li Ogg (1928-2001), and the first national degree in Korean studies was established in 1959 at Sorbonne University, and then the same year the *Langues Orientales* also created its own degree in Korean. Li Ogg was a specialist of Korean ancient history and defended his PhD about Koguryō in 1977 at the University of Paris Diderot (Paris 7).<sup>24</sup> He became the first full professor of Korean in France in 1983. During his career, he has published several teaching and research materials about Korean history, mythology, and language for students and general audience.<sup>25</sup>

In the the early 1970's appeared another prominent figure of the first generation of Korean studies, who was a pre-modernist as well. Daniel Bouchez (1928-2014), a former catholic missionary in Korea from 1958 to 1970, was a specialist of Korean literature and language (*hangŭl*, middle Korean, *hanmun*). During his late but prolific career as an international specialist of Korea, he published and presented a number of studies that are still regarded as references.<sup>26</sup> His main focus of study was Kim Manjung 金萬重 (1637-1692) and his

---

<sup>23</sup> Hagenauer has been teaching Japanese from 1932 to 1953 at the *Langues Orientales Vivantes* and from 1953 to 1967 at the Sorbonne University. In 1944-1945, he started teaching a small class of five students about Korean history and culture but had to interrupt it when, being a Jew, he had to flee to Southern France. Back in Paris after World War II, Hagenauer taught about religions of Japan and Korea between 1933 and 1967 at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes études* (EPHE). Thanks to Hagenauer's efforts, Sorbonne University established in 1959 a national degree in Korean studies (*Certificat d'études supérieures de coréen*) and the Japanese Section was renamed the Section of Japanese and Korean studies.

<sup>24</sup> Li Ogg, "Recherche sur l'antiquité coréenne, ethnologie et société de Koguryō" (Research on Korean antiquity, ethnology and society of Koguryō), University of Paris 7, 1977.

<sup>25</sup> Li Ogg, *Histoire de la Corée*, collection *Que sais-je ?*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1969 ; Li Ogg, *Histoire de la Corée, des origines à nos jours*, éditions du Léopard d'or, Paris and Aesan Hakhoe, Seoul, 1985 ; Li Ogg, *Initiation à la langue coréenne*, Kyobo editions, Seoul, 1985 ; Li Ogg, *La Corée*, Le Léopard d'or, Paris and Aesan Hakhoe, Seoul, 1988 ; Li Ogg, *La mythologie coréenne et son expression artistique*, Le Léopard d'or, 1995 ; *Articles du professeur Li Ogg*, Mémoires du Centre d'études coréennes, Institut d'études coréennes, Collège de France, Paris, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Bouchez became instructor in Korean studies both at Paris 7 and the EPHE (IV<sup>th</sup> Section) in the early 1970's. In 1972 he was recruited in his forties as a permanent researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS). While teaching he prepared and obtained a doctoral degree at Paris 7 in 1975. His dissertation, entitled « *Les Pérégrinations de Dame Xie dans le Sud: étude sur un*



novels.<sup>27</sup> Bouchez was among the founding members and used to be the President of the Association of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE)<sup>28</sup> and the French Association for Korean Studies.<sup>29</sup> Bouchez was the one who contributed to the belated recognition of Courant as the founding father of Korean studies in France and thus helped establish a history of the field. In 2007, he was made a Knight of the National Order of the Legion of Honour –the Order being the highest decoration in France – for his “eminent merits” and contribution to the knowledge of Korea in France

A third founding figure of the first generation of French Koreanists is Marc Orange, who is also a pre-modernist and a founding member of the AFPEC.<sup>30</sup> He is among the two first graduates in the 1960’s from the degree in Korean studies established by Hagenauer at Sorbonne University and was taught by Hagenauer and Li Ogg.<sup>31</sup> Under Li’s guidance, Orange gave up writing a PhD dissertation in Law and specialized instead in Korean novels from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (*Tale of Lady Pak* and *Tale of Suk-Hyang*) and became a translator of pre-modern but also modern literature.<sup>32</sup> Orange also worked on the French archives available

---

roman coréen » (The journey of Lady Xie to the South: a study of a Korean novel) was published in 1984. Daniel Bouchez, “Tradition, traduction et interprétation d'un roman coréen, le *Namjŏng ki*” (Tradition, translation and interpretation of a Korean novel, the *Namjŏng ki*), *Mémoires du Centre d'études coréennes*, vol. V, Institut d'études coréennes, Collège de France, Paris, 1984

<sup>27</sup> *To the South (Namjŏng ki 南征記)* and *Dreams of nine clouds (Kuunmong 九雲夢)*. As the co-author and adapter in French of the *History of Korean literature* by Cho Tongil 趙東一 (born 1939), he contributed to a better understanding of Korean literary tradition in France and Europe. Cf. Cho Tong-il and Daniel Bouchez, *Histoire de la littérature coréenne, des origines à nos jours*, Fayard, Paris, 2002. Cho Tongil 조동일, *Han'guk munhak t'ongsa 한국문학통사, chisik sanŏpsa*, vol.1-5, 1982-1989.

<sup>28</sup> The Association for Korean studies in Europe (AKSE) was created in 1976 by Frits Vos (The Netherlands), William Skillend (Great Britain) and Li Ogg (France). The first AKSE conference was held in 1977. French is among the official languages of AKSE (other languages are German, English, and Korean). Among French scholars of the first generation, Li Ogg, Daniel Bouchez, André Fabre, and Alex Guillemoz have acted as the presidents of the AKSE. Besides, there have always been at least one representative of France sitting in the AKSE council, as well as in the committee for the Korea Foundation Fellowships in Europe.

<sup>29</sup> Association Française pour l'Etude de la Corée (AFPEC).

<sup>30</sup> After obtaining a degree in Public Law and studying Chinese and Korean from 1962 to 1967, Orange finally turned into Korean studies and wrote a PhD on Korean literature. He taught at Paris 7 from 1971 to 2002 and at Paris 10 from 1971 to 1983. He was the director of the Institut d'études coréennes (IEC) of the Collège de France from 1992 to 2002 and was the président of the Association française pour l'étude de la Corée (AFPEC) from 1995 to 2001. He was awarded the Prix Culturel Sejong (Sejong Cultural Award) in 2013.

<sup>31</sup> André Fabre (1932-2009), a linguist who would later become a full professor of Korean at INALCO, graduated first in 1962 and Marc Orange in 1964.

<sup>32</sup> Orange translated several times the *Pakssi chŏn* (Tale of Lady Pak). A first translation was published together with a translation of the *Sukhyang chŏn* (Tale of Sukhyang) in a volume published in 1982 : Marc Orange and Kim Su-Chung (trans.), *Histoire de Dame Pak. Histoire de Suk-Hyang : deux romans coréens du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (The Tale of Lady Pak and Tale of Suk-Hyang : two korean novels from the 18<sup>th</sup> c.), l'Asiathèque, Paris, 1982. A second, revised translation with a fac-simile of the Korean edition was published in 2016 : Marc Orange (trans.), *Histoire de Dame Pak 박씨전*, L'Asiathèque, Paris, 2016. He translated contemporary South Korean short stories : *Une femme à la recherche d'une illusion* (Woman in search of an illusion), Aibel and Fanlac, Lausanne and Périgueux, 1980 (reprint 2003).

at the Ministry of Foreign affairs that are related to Korea until August 1910 before the annexation by Japan and has been continuously interested in the relationships between France and Korea from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>

These three figures, who were studying and teaching about pre-modern Korea, were among the founders of Korean studies in France but also in Europe. With their modernist colleagues,<sup>34</sup> they tried to build up the field of Korean studies in French academia. They have been now replaced and outnumbered by a new generation that is holding positions in Paris but also in several big cities.

### *The places of pre-modern Korean studies in France today*

The French system of higher education and research has a long and complex history, and has been undergoing large-scale reforms since a few decades. To sum up and try to map out the places where pre-modern Korean studies are done more specifically in France today, let us briefly mention the four institutions where permanent teaching and research staff specialized in pre-modern Korean studies have been recruited in recent years.

The first one is Paris Diderot University with one full professor in pre-modern studies, Yannick Bruneton,<sup>35</sup> and one assistant professor in pre-modern studies, Pierre-Emmanuel Roux.<sup>36</sup> The second place is the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Marc Orange, *Archives françaises relatives à la Corée : inventaire analytique* (French Archives related to Korea : an analytical survey), vol. 1, Ministère des affaires étrangères, Mémoires du Centre d'études coréennes, Institut d'études coréennes, Collège de France, Paris, 1987; *Archives françaises relatives à la Corée : inventaire analytique* (French Archives related to Korea : an analytical survey), vol. 2 Ministère des affaires étrangères, mémoires du Centre d'études coréennes, Institut d'études coréennes, Collège de France, Paris, 2013. See also Marc Orange, *Les études coréennes en France* (Korean studies in France), *Revue de Corée*, vol.2, n° 4, winter, 1970, pp. 36-38 ; Marc Orange, *한불수교 120 년사의 재조명* (120 ans de relations diplomatiques entre la France et la Corée), *국사편찬 위원회*, 11. 2007, pp. 269-298.

<sup>34</sup> Especially André Fabre, Martine Prost, and Shim Seung-ja (linguistics), Lee Byung-joo, Kim Bona, and Patrick Maurus (literature), Li Jine-Mieung and Alain Delissen (history), Bertrand Chung (political science), Alexandre Guillemoz (anthropology).

<sup>35</sup> Yannick Bruneton (born 1970) studied Korean at Paris 7 with Li Ogg, Daniel Bouchez, and Marc Orange. He also studied in Korea at Yŏngnam University and then at the AKS (1996-2000). He obtained his PhD in 2002 at Paris 7, "Les moines gomanciens de Koryŏ (918-1392). Une étude critique des sources" (The monks geomancers of Koryŏ (918-1392). A critical study of sources). He was recruited as an assistant professor in 2004 at Paris Diderot University. Since then, he has been very active in national and international levels and published several articles and book chapters. Primarily interested in Koryŏ history, Buddhism, epigraphy, and translations, he teaches *hanja*, *hanmun*, *hansi* as well as Korean history, historiography, and epigraphy. He became full professor in 2016. For a more detailed CV and bibliography of Yannick Bruneton, see <http://crc.ehess.fr/index.php?178> .

<sup>36</sup> Pierre-Emmanuel Roux (born 1979) studied history, Chinese, and Korean. He obtained his PhD at EHESS in 2013, "La Trinité antichrétienne : Essai sur la proscription du catholicisme en Chine, en Corée et au Japon (XVIIe-XIXe siècles)" (The anti-christian trinity : essay on the proscription of catholicism in China, Korea, and Japan. 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries). He published in 2012 "La Croix, la baleine et le canon : la France face à la Corée au

(INALCO ; the former *Langues Orientales*), with one full professor in pre-modern studies, Kim Daeyeol.<sup>37</sup> Paris Diderot University and INALCO are part of the same association of higher education institutions called Comue<sup>38</sup> *Université Sorbonne-Paris-Cité* (USPC). This Comue gathers the greatest numbers of under-graduate students in Korean studies in France.<sup>39</sup> The third place is the Research Center on Korea (*Centre de recherches sur la Corée CRC*) at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales*, EHESS),<sup>40</sup> with the only one researcher from the National Center for Scientific Research in France (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique CNRS*) appointed to it since 2009,<sup>41</sup> Isabelle Sancho.<sup>42</sup> The EHESS is part of the Comue *Université de recherche*

---

milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle” (The Cross, the whale, and the cannon : France facing Korea in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century), Paris, Les éditions du Cerf, 460 p., for which he was awarded the prize Auguste Pavie of the *Académie des sciences d’outre-mer* in 2012. He was a Korea Foundation post-doctoral fellow at the Ruhr university-Bochum and is an associate researcher at the CECMC at our joint unit “China, Korea, Japan.” Among his publications : « The Great Ming Code and the Repression of Catholics in Chosŏn Korea », *Acta Koreana*, vol. 15, n°1, juin 2012, p. 73-106 ; « Chosŏn kagyō ūi chaebalgŏn : 16-19 segi ch’ŏnjugyo sŏn’gyosa ūi Chosŏn chinch’ul chŏllyak e taehan kich’o yŏn’gu (The Rediscovery of the Korean Bridge : A Preliminary Study of the Catholic Missionaries’ Strategies regarding Korea, 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century) », *Yŏnmin Hakchi*, vol. 16, août 2011, p. 189-233. For a more detailed CV and bibliography of Roux, see <http://cecmc.ehess.fr/index.php?2480>.

<sup>37</sup> Kim Daeyeol (born 1964) studied chemistry and the history of religions at Seoul National University in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Then he came to France and studied art history and archeology as well as the history and anthropology of religions at Sorbonne University (Paris 4). He obtained his PhD in anthropology of religions at Sorbonne university in 2000, “Symbolisme de la force vitale en Chine ancienne : Modèles et significations dans l’alchimie taoïste opératoire (études des pratiques alchimiques du *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (4e siècle après J.-C. en Chine))” (Symbolism of vital force in ancient China : models and meanings in the operative Daoist alchemy (studies of achemic practices of the *Baopuzi neipian*)). He published articles in French, English and Korean. For a more detailed CV and bibliography of Kim Daeyeol, see <http://www.inalco.fr/enseignant-chercheur/daeyeol-kim>.

<sup>38</sup> Following previous laws that have been enforced successively to the sector of higher education and public research in France in the 2000’s-2010’s, the latest law adopted in 2013 has created the *Communautés d’universités et d’établissements* (COMUE or Comue ; “Groups of universities and institutions”). These Comues, of which there are 21 today, are associations of universities and higher education institutions, in charge of coordinating educational provision. They are under the umbrella of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and fall under the category of “Public scientific, cultural or professional establishments,” which have legal, administrative, and financial autonomies.

<sup>39</sup> This academic year 2017-2018, at Paris Diderot University there are 136 students enrolled in Licence 1, 82 in Licence 2, 48 in Licence 3, 14 in Master 1, 13 in Master 2, and 1 PhD candidate. At the INALCO, there are 183 in Licence 1, 132 in Licence 2, 97 in Licence 3, 20 in Master 1, 35 in Master 2 and 2 PhD candidates (co-supervision)

<sup>40</sup> As a post-graduate research center providing large library resources, mostly in Korean, the center gathers most of the French specialists of Korea as permanent members, affiliates, or associates. It is the most prominent research center devoted to Korean studies in France.

<sup>41</sup> Every CNRS researcher, once hired by one of the disciplinary sections of the CNRS, is appointed by the CNRS in a joint research unit where they became a permanent statutory member of the staff of that unit. Appointed by the CNRS at the CRC, which is part of the joint unit CNRS-EHESS “China, Korea, Japan,” Isabelle Sancho is thus a statutory member of the CRC which is a EHESS research center. The CNRS recruits a few researchers every year in each of its sections (disciplines). These recruitments are based on national recruitment procedures and researchers, who become French civil servants, are permanently recruited for the life-time research project for which they had been selected. Sancho is the only one CNRS researcher for Korean studies, since Orange’s retirement in 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Isabelle Sancho (born 1978) studied Chinese and Korean at the University of Bordeaux 3 and then at INALCO. She obtained her PhD at INALCO in 2006, “Chongsim (‘rendre droit son cœur’) : une notion

*Paris Sciences et Lettres* (PSL Research University) that gathers, for Korean studies, the colleagues from the EHESS, Collège de France, and French School of Asian Studies (*Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* EFEO).

The fourth place of pre-modern Korean studies is the Seoul Centre of the EFEO, with Elisabeth Chabanol<sup>43</sup> who has been conducting for almost fifteen years ground-breaking archeological research in Kaesŏng, in collaboration with the National Bureau of Cultural Property Conservation of the DPRK.<sup>44</sup>

Beside these four higher education institutions, one should notice the role still played by the Guimet Museum in Korean studies. There are two specialists of Korean pre-modern art who have been occupying permanent positions there, working frequently with Koreanists: Francis Macouin who has recently published an introductory book about Chosŏn Korea<sup>45</sup> and Pierre Cambon who published several articles about Korean pre-modern art and has been often meeting the demand coming from the general public.<sup>46</sup>

The library funds available for pre-modern studies are located at the respective libraries of Paris Diderot University, INALCO,<sup>47</sup> EHESS, EFEO, and Guimet Museum. But the richest library is located at the Collège de France,<sup>48</sup> in the *Institut d'études coréennes* (IEC).<sup>49</sup> The

---

cardinale de l'interprétation coréenne du néo-confucianisme. Etude centrée sur Yulgok, Yi I (1536-1584)" (Chongsim ('straightening one's heart') : one of the central ideas of the Korean interpretation of Neo-confucianism). She was a Korea Foundation post-doctoral fellow at the Korea Institute at Harvard University and the research assistant (*attaché temporaire d'enseignement et de recherche* ATER) of Anne Cheng, professor of Chinese Intellectual History at the Collège de France. For more information about Isabelle Sancho, see <http://crc.ehess.fr/index.php?193>.

<sup>43</sup> The EFEO (프랑스국립극동연구원) has a branch office in Seoul, called The Seoul Centre. This centre was established by Bertrand Chung in 1994 at the Asian Research Institute of the Korea University (고려대학교 아세아문제 연구소). In 2001 Elisabeth Chabanol, an archeologist and specialist of East Asian art history, was recruited at the EFEO and has been acting as the head of the centre since 2002.

<sup>44</sup> Mission Archéologique à Kaesŏng (MAK). A catalogue about the exhibition presenting the results of this archeological research carried out until 2014 by the EFEO and the National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (NAPCH) in DPRK has been published in 2017. The exhibition was held from September 15 to November 30 in Pyongyang (조선 민속 박물관) and in September 2017 in Kaesong (고려 박물관). Cf. *La forteresse de Kaesong. Catalogue de l'exposition sur les recherches archéologiques conjointes de la forteresse de Kaesong* (조선-프랑스 개성성공동조사발굴), Collection Essais, *L'Atelier des Cahiers*, november 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Macouin is a now retired chief curator at the Guimet Museum. He is an honorary associate member of the CRC and a member of the AFPEC. Cf. Francis Macouin, *La Corée du Chosŏn. 1392-1896* (Chosŏn Korea. 1892-1896), Guide Belles lettres des civilisations, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2009. See also, Francis Macouin (dir.), *Études d'architecture et d'urbanisme coréens*, Paris, Collège de France, 1994, 262 pages and pictures.

<sup>46</sup> Pierre Cambon (born 1955), chief curator and manager of the Korean collection at the Guimet Museum, also works closely with a few members of the CRC without being formally an associate of the center.

<sup>47</sup> The library of the INALCO is called BULAC. See <http://www.bulac.fr/bulac-in-english/who-are-we/>.

<sup>48</sup> This most prestigious research establishment, firstly called Collège Royal (Royal College), was created in 1530 in a humanist inspiration by king Francis 1 of France. Renamed Collège de France in 1870, it is composed and managed today by a faculty of about fifty professors, elected by the professors themselves. The Collège de

IEC library provides about 30,000 books and periodicals (70% in Korean) about literature, history, philosophy, law, and arts,<sup>50</sup> and maintains also precious books coming from the Maurice Courant collection.<sup>51</sup>

In large cities in France where Korean studies have been implemented since the late 1980's (Lyon, Bordeaux, Le Havre, La Rochelle, Aix-en-Provence), there are not as many permanent staff as in parisian institutions and there is no pre-modernist at all.

### *French pre-modernists today : some characteristics*

Today there are five permanent teaching and research staff in pre-modern Korean studies in France : Bruneton (epigraphy, historiography, didactics of *hanja* and *hanmun*, focus on Koryŏ), Kim (cultural and religious history, history of science, focus on king Chŏngjo), Chabanol (archeology, three kingdoms, Silla and Koryŏ, focus on Kaesŏng), Sancho (intellectual history, Confucianism, translation, focus on Yulgok and Hwadam), and Roux (religious and legal history, comparative historiography of China and Korea).

They are all historians, covering together a period going from the Three kingdoms to the late Chosŏn. Most of them are from the same generation (late thirties-early fifties) and they are all very united among themselves, while working closely with modernists to develop Korean studies in France. Beyond this first statement, a couple of specific remarks can be made about them.

Firstly, they all have the status of government civil servants enjoying life-long permanent positions. One should however notice that there are two other PhD holders in pre-modern studies who do not have yet any permanent positions : Ariane Perrin (art history) and Noe Jeehyun (intellectual history and philology, focus on Tasan).

Secondly, they have all occupied or still occupy key positions in academic structures in France and Europe. Bruneton and Kim are the only full professors at Paris Diderot and

---

France does not grant degrees and all lectures by professors are free and open to anyone. There is one Chair of Chinese studies and one of Japanese studies. There has never been a Chair for Korean studies.

<sup>49</sup> The IEC was founded in 1959 at Sorbonne by Haguenaer, based on the personal library resources provided by the latter, and was transferred in 1973 to the Collège de France where it is part of the Institutes of the Far East.

<sup>50</sup> The library catalog can be consulted online at <http://bude.college-de-france.fr>.

<sup>51</sup> A survey of this collection maintained at the Collège de France has been carried out in 2010 and published in a bilingual edition (French-Korean) by the National Library of Korea : 국외소재 한국 고문헌 조사보고서 1. 콜레주 드 프랑스 소장 한국 고문헌. *Rapport sur les documents anciens coréens présents à l'étranger I. Le fonds ancien coréen du Collège de France*, 국립중앙도서관 The National Library of Korea, Seoul, 2012.

Inalco. There are only four people authorized to supervise PhD dissertations in France and they represent half of them.<sup>52</sup> Chabanol is the head of the Seoul Centre of the EFEO. Sancho has been the director of the CRC –the only research centre of Korean studies in France– and the deputy director of the joint research unit “China, Korea, Japan” at EHESS from 2013 to December 2017. Roux became the director of the Korean section at Paris Diderot University right after being recruited.

Thirdly, they are very active on the European and international scales. Bruneton was the secretary of the AKSE and organized the 2007 Conference in Dourdan. He was also the head of the RESCOR 1 (2010-2015), also called Paris Consortium. This multi-year research project, which aims to maintain a collaborative network of Korea specialists in France and francophone countries, is funded by a five-year grant from the Korean Studies Promotion Service (KSPS).<sup>53</sup> Kim is currently the head of the RESCOR 2 (2015-2020).<sup>54</sup> Chabanol is the head of the joint archeological mission in Kaesong. Sancho took the initiative to organize in Paris the first international Conference of pre-modern Korean studies in Europe<sup>55</sup> and sits in the screening committee for the Korea Foundation fellowships for Western Europe. Roux is a member of diverse international projects about Law in East Asia, among which one funded by the KSPS.<sup>56</sup>

These main features demonstrate that French pre-modernists are all very dynamic on both national and international levels ; they dedicate a lot of time and energy for collective work and administration ; they are eager to develop the visibility of their area of expertise within the field of globalized Korean studies but also in French East-Asian studies.

---

<sup>52</sup> The other two are both at the EHESS : Alain Delissen (modern historian) and Valérie Gelézeau (geographer).

<sup>53</sup> The consortium was first based on existing networks (AFPEC, AKSE). The RESCOR 1 created and operated a collaborative website hosted at Paris Diderot University (<http://www.reseau-etudes-coree.univ-paris-diderot.fr/>) and a scientific blog hosted by one platform of OpenEdition, [hypotheses.org](http://parisconsortium.hypotheses.org/) (<http://parisconsortium.hypotheses.org/>). It organized five international workshops and conferences to delineate the objectives of the network, develop collaborative tools, identify the possible partners, and deepen the interactions between its members on national and international scales.

<sup>54</sup> The on-going program of the RESCOR 2 (2015-2020), renewed thanks to another KSPS funding, pursues a slightly different purpose. While maintaining and enriching the website and digital library, it focuses on the strengthening of francophone Korean studies through the funding of students (Master and PhD fellowships) and the publication of teaching and research materials in French by the founding members of the RESCOR. These materials can be put online and/or published in printed formats.

<sup>55</sup> “Pre-Modern Korean Studies in Europe : Results, Projects, and Prospects,” Paris, 20-22 January 2016, CRC, funded by the AKS, the CRC and the IEC of Collège de France. The objective of the conference was to bring together in an unprecedented academic event most of the European or Europe-based pre-modernists in Korean Studies.

<sup>56</sup> Project directed by Jérôme Bourgon (CNRS- École Normale Supérieure of Lyon-University of Geneva) from 2011 to 2014, “Legalizing space in China : the shaping of the imperial territory through a layered legal system”, and “Korean Law and History,” a project funded by the Korean Society for the Promotion of Science (KSPS) and directed by Jérôme Bourgon and Marie Seonghak Kim (an attorney at law and professor of history at St. Cloud State University in the U.S.A).

## *Challenges*

However there are two major challenges to which they must respond in the years to come.

The first problem is the very limited number of students they have collectively trained in about ten years. There is currently only one PhD student in pre-modern studies, Damien Peladan (maritime history, connected history, underwater archeology, Korean and Japanese historiographies), who is under the supervision of Bruneton and Guillaume Carré, a Japonologist from the EHESS. There are several explanations to this phenomenon. Chabanol and Sancho, as researchers, do not teach, Bruneton and Kim both became full professor only in 2016, and Roux was recruited in 2015. Besides, when considering their own trajectories, it is striking that only one of them is a pupil of the first generation of French pre-modernists, Bruneton, who is also the only one who studied partly in Korea. Chabanol is a graduate from the Ecole du Louvre and Sorbonne's Art history department. Kim, Sancho, and Roux have all majored in Classical Chinese studies in France under the supervisions of Sinologists.

The second problem, which partly explains the first one, is the lack of teaching and research materials for pre-modern studies in French (translations, textbooks, manuals of *hanmum*, maps, monographies). The first generation of pre-modernists did not leave systematic didactic materials because they were building up the field of Korean studies. Current pre-modernists have not published or achieved many materials either so far. Some of them are juggling between publishing and working mainly in English to gain more visibility on international stages (AAS, AKSE) and teaching and writing in French. All are burdened by their administrative workload in France. Their collective commitment in French academia is crucial to try to maintain Korean studies as a separately structured subfield as the on-going grand reforms tend to blend them within bigger area studies ("Asian Studies") and threaten the cohesion of Koreanists by putting their home institutions in competition with one another. This situation means that under-graduate students must rely mostly on materials written at best in English, which can be a real struggle for them, or directly in Korean, which is simply not realistic at under-graduate levels. Besides, with the dramatic massification of undergraduate students population that followed the newly acquired attractiveness of Korean culture in France due to the success of K-pop and South Korean entertainment culture in the last decade, classes are overcrowded, as there is no real selection process for admission to universities in France. Moreover, the younger generation of students is not interested in pre-

modern period at all and, generally speaking, they do not intend to pursue into post-graduate degrees.

### *Conclusion*

Today pre-modern Korean studies in France are strong, when one considers the sizeable number of specialists who have been recruited in permanent positions within the past two decades, thanks to the attractiveness of Korea as well as the willingness of French universities and higher education institutions to start acknowledging Korean studies as a meaningful field. These pre-modernists play a leading role in the collective effort to develop the community of French Korean studies in France and abroad with their modernist colleagues. But French pre-modern studies are still fragile at the same time. The reforms in the higher education and research sector in France as well as the dramatic boom of under-graduate students population, mainly interested in contemporary society, drain their energy and time. In order to build up true foundations to their subfield of specialty, they have now to keep focused on producing teaching and research materials in French. That is exactly the goal set by the RESCOR 2 and pre-modernists have already pledge themselves to publish and achieve several materials within the four years to come : a *hanmun* manual, a few bilingual and annotated translations (the biographies of monks from the *Koryŏsa*, a selection of novels by Pak Chiwŏn), a monography on Yulgok introducing ways of researching about Chosŏn Confucianism, a monography on the 18<sup>th</sup> century focused on the reign of Chŏngjo, an anthology of pre-modern sources translated and introduced for students. These first few steps are, hopefully, expected to start laying the foundation upon which pre-modern studies in France could outlast the current generation in the future and become a true academic tradition.