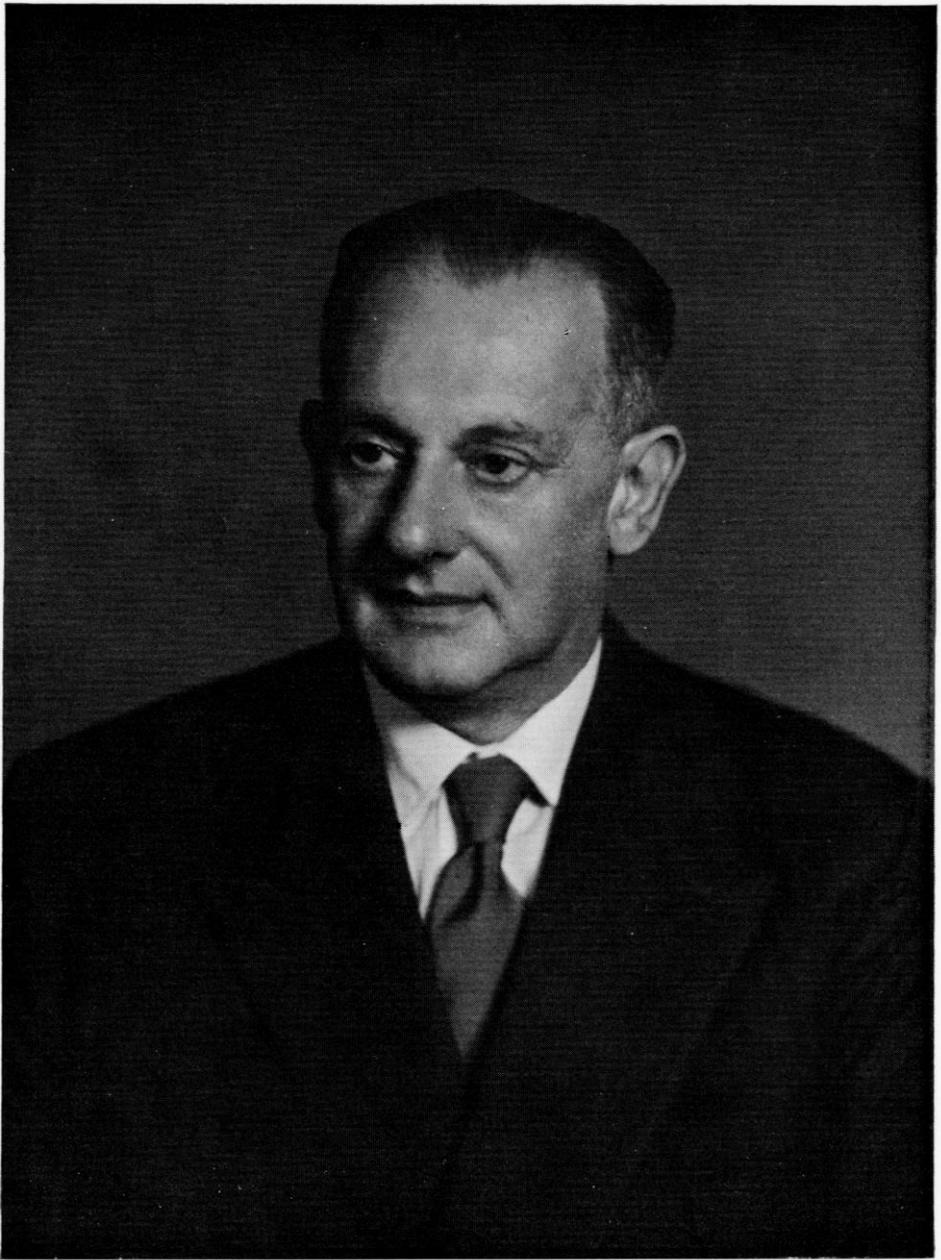


PLATE XXIV



WALTER SIMON

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## ERNST JULIUS WALTER SIMON

1893-1981

ERNST JULIUS WALTER SIMON, Professor Emeritus of Chinese in the University of London, was born in Berlin on 10 June 1893. He attended the University of Berlin from 1911 to 1914, where his studies lay in the fields of Romance and Classical philology. He belonged to just that generation of young Europeans whose lives and careers were the first to be interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, in which he served from 1914 to 1918. He was employed in military intelligence, as far as I can ascertain in the reading of enemy codes. In 1919 he returned to Berlin, and took his doctorate with a dissertation on the characteristics of the Judaeo-Spanish dialect of Salonika. This was published in the following year. In 1919, too, he passed the State Examination for Higher School Teaching in French, Latin, and Greek. He had pedagogic ambitions, and was attracted by the idea of teaching classical languages through conversation, as if they were modern tongues, but in the event he followed in the professional footsteps of his father, Heinrich Simon, and became a librarian. He entered the Higher Library Service at the University of Berlin in 1919, and in 1920 passed the Higher Library Examination. After a year's service at the University of Kiel, he returned, in 1922, to his old University of Berlin, where he remained until his dismissal in 1935.

It was not until after he had taken his doctorate that Simon turned his attention to Oriental studies, a discipline in which he was to build up, in Germany, a second career, parallel to that of librarian. He studied Sinology under the late Professor Otto Franke, but his linguistic interests and skills ranged far beyond China. He had a thorough knowledge of Japanese, Tibetan, and Manchu, could make use of Mongolian, and was at home in Russian as an ancillary language, an advantage enjoyed by few Sinologists of his own or the following generation. By his own admission, and Simon was the most modest of men, he was an extraordinarily gifted linguist. When, in 1935, he had to fill out a 'General Information' sheet for the Academic Assistance Council, one of the questions to be answered concerned the languages of which he had a speaking and a reading knowledge. To the second part of this enquiry he was able to reply, in good conscience: 'Almost all European languages, Chinese and Japanese.'

Simon began the study of Chinese in 1920. In 1926 he was admitted as *Privatdozent* at Berlin, authorized to teach in the field of Far Eastern linguistics. His teaching responsibilities were extended in 1929, and again in 1931, by which time he was permitted to cover the whole field of Sinological studies. In 1932 he became Professor, with the title of *Nichtbeamteter außerordentlicher Universitätsprofessor*: it was still the library service which provided him with his living. For a time, in 1931–2, during the hiatus between the retirement of Otto Franke and the arrival of Erich Haenisch, practically all the Sinological teaching at Berlin was in his hands. From 1930, too, he was a coeditor of the *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, Germany's main vehicle for reviews of orientalist literature. Simon's library career flourished too during these years. In 1929 he was sent to England to study British libraries, and in 1930 he was relieved from part of his duties in order to be able to devote more time to academic research. The year 1932–3 saw Simon in Peking, as Exchange Librarian with the National Library there. It was as a result of this visit that he compiled the romanized index and the foreword to Li Teh-ch'i's *Union Catalogue of Manchu Books in the National Library of Peiping and the Library of the Palace Museum*. By 1935, when his career as a librarian was abruptly terminated in accordance with the discriminatory policies of the Nazi government, he was an established librarian, with the rank of *Bibliotheksrat*.

Simon left Germany early in 1936, under the stress of political and racial discrimination: there was no future left there for a Jewish scholar, even one of his eminence. While he was still in China, his wife had written to him to try to persuade him not to return, though in fact he did so. A former pupil of his, Professor Emeritus Wolfgang Franke, of the University of Hamburg (the son of Otto Franke), recalled to me many afternoon walks with his old teacher through the streets of Berlin, from the Sinologische Seminar to the Potsdamer Bahnhof, during which they had long conversations about the deteriorating political situation. This was before his visit to China. 'He was a German patriot, and still in 1931/2, in the face of the threat of the Nazis getting political power, much more optimistic than me. Unfortunately, later my view proved to be right.' It was possibly Simon's record of war service, and the international recognition which his academic work had won, which protected him for a short while, but in 1934 his *venia legendi*—the authorization to teach at university—was withdrawn, and in 1935 he was dismissed from his established library post. It was clearly time to leave Germany, and at the age

of forty-three, married, and with two young sons, Simon had to take the difficult step of turning his back on the homeland which had deserted him, and on his career, and start again in a foreign environment.

Fortunately, Simon had made his mark in the world of international scholarship, and had won the respect of all those scholars whose opinion mattered, including those who, like Bernhard Karlgren, did not always agree with him professionally. Towards the end of 1935 he visited London, and began discussions with the Academic Assistance Council, later the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, whose business affairs were conducted by its Secretary, Mr Walter Adams. Prospects were none too good for the out-of-work foreign scholar. Money was, as usual, tight, and Simon's fate was shared by many others whose skills the Nazis were shortsightedly prepared to dispense with.

Simon came to England with the highest references. The names of those who supplied the Academic Assistance Council with testimonials to his scholarly qualifications and his exemplary character read like a roll-call of contemporary Sinology. Hardly a name which counted is missing, and the record includes, to their credit, those of some of his recent German colleagues. It is well worth recalling the names of those who did their best to help a colleague who had fallen on evil days, and whose testimonials have survived. From Germany itself there were his old teacher, Otto Franke, his senior at Berlin, Erich Haenisch, and Paul Kahle of Bonn; from France, Jean Przyluski, Henri Maspero (who himself did not survive the holocaust from which Simon escaped), and Paul Pelliot; from the Netherlands, J. J. L. Duyvendak; from Sweden, Bernhard Karlgren; and from Britain, Lionel Giles and Arthur Waley. Simon had his well-wishers at the School of Oriental Studies (as it then was), his future academic home, also, notably the then Director, Sir E. Denison Ross. Yet, with all this, it was difficult at first for him to find a niche. Every one of his referees wrote of him in the most glowing terms, both as a man and a scholar, but none could offer any practical assistance. There were vague suggestions—what about Toronto, or the USA? Or a library post somewhere in China? Was anything to be hoped for from Jerusalem? If anything was going to be done to help Simon, that help would come only from England, yet here too it seemed, at first, as if it would not be possible for him to rehabilitate himself. The trouble was that the Academic Assistance Council was reluctant to make a grant unless there was some assurance that such help would definitely lead to his re-establishment in a university

or similar career, while the School, the only potential refuge, had no money it could commit in the long term, and could not, on the spur of the moment, establish a post for him. The most it could do was to offer some hourly paid lectures, and that was not enough.

The problem was solved when 'certain anonymous donors' offered the Council enough money to maintain Simon from early 1936, when it was expected that he would return to London, until the end of July 1938. With this prospect, the School could make its offer of academic hospitality effective. The offer was made and accepted in February 1936, and in August the Home Office agreed to vary his conditions of landing in the United Kingdom so as to allow him to stay until 31 July 1938, and take up employment. But well before that time, the situation resolved itself in Simon's favour, at least as far as his career prospects were concerned. In June 1937 he was appointed to a part-time lectureship for the session 1937-8. During the course of that session, the University first granted him recognition as a university teacher, and then appointed him to a Readership by title.

It was only in September 1939 that Simon was granted permanent residence for himself and his family, and the outbreak of war brought with it new doubts and difficulties. The possibility of internment occurred to him at once, and he must have communicated this worry to the Director of the School, Professor R. L. (later Sir Ralph) Turner, for on 2 September, Turner, a constant and helpful friend, wrote to reassure him: 'I trust you will not be subjected to internment. I have informed certain Government Departments that your presence at the School will be required.' So far, so good, and the only disability which complicated his daily life was the irksome restriction on travel which applied to enemy aliens who were left at liberty, and who had to seek police permission for any journey lasting more than twenty-four hours. It looked at first as if he might need to travel up and down to Cambridge, to which the School had partially removed for a short while, and this provoked a certain amount of time-wasting and unsettling correspondence.

With the collapse of France in the summer of 1940, and the prospect of invasion, the spectre of internment darkened Simon's life once more. The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning prepared to appeal against his internment, and Professor Turner furnished them with the argument that the services of the Reader in Chinese would certainly be needed if the War Office and other Departments required to have officers trained in Chinese. At the beginning of October, Simon received official

notification that he had been classified as exempt from internment until further order, though, in the correspondence which I have seen, there is a laconic note which reads: 'Not to teach Chinese to officers'—a self-contradictory compromise.

In the spring of 1941 Simon was detached to the Friends' Ambulance Unit Training Camp at Manor Park, Birmingham, where he spent a couple of months teaching Chinese. His teaching materials already included his forthcoming *Chinese Sentence Series*. Teaching, formal and informal, went on for most of the day and, sometimes, the evening too. As Simon wrote to his Head of Department at the School, Professor Eve Edwards:

I teach group B from 2-3, and Mr. Hsiao takes them from 3-4. Then both of us can leave (and often do), if we do not stay (or return) for tea, which is at 5 o'clock. Supper is at 8, and Mr. Hsiao whose enthusiasm is boundless, has just now made up his mind to help students again in the evening, and the only comment I can make about this is that we must be thankful for the curfew at 10.30 which is imposed here at Birmingham. I have no doubt that, but for the curfew, he would go on until midnight. In any case, he will assure you, if you touch upon this subject, that he is doing very little.

So, one can be quite sure, would Simon himself.

Even into these short crash-courses of a professional, practical nature, Simon characteristically introduced a leaven of 'culture'. Saturday mornings were given over to revision and general talks, and in the same letter to Professor Edwards he wrote:

I have prepared something on Mencius for tomorrow. And I think it is good for the students to know that Chinese, while enabling them to say 'I walk towards the blackboard', or 'I get up from my chair', has also been the vehicle of sublime thoughts, expressed in an incomparable way. What Mencius said about the 'True King' will, I hope, be of special interest to the students of this camp.

This chance quotation from a wartime letter to a colleague confirms what others have said about the breadth and humanity of Simon's teaching. As a beginner, Wolfgang Franke followed Simon's seminars in Berlin on *Liao-chai chih-i* and *Chuang-tzu* and his class on the reading of Japanese for Sinologists, an introduction to *Kambun*.

Text-reading [he wrote to me], was the basis, but Simon understood well how to explain the contents and make reading interesting for the students. I greatly enjoyed his seminars and learned a lot from Simon, in particular in comparison with the rather dull, purely philological readings offered later by Haenisch, whose approach to texts I could not appreciate at all.

When in 1934 Simon was forbidden to teach at Berlin, his students protested to the university authorities, but to no avail, something which must have demanded a certain degree of civil courage, given the political conditions in Germany at the time. Quite independently, Dr Katherine Whitaker, a lifelong friend and colleague of Simon's at the School, and holder of a readership after him, told me how his London students would sometimes ask for extra classes, outside the agreed curriculum, recognizing his unusual scholarship and ability to communicate his knowledge.

Simon's status as an enemy alien irked him throughout the war years. He had applied for naturalization in mid-1941, with Professor Turner as one of his sponsors, but without success. In January 1943 he sent Turner a long letter on the subject, in which, with characteristic self-effacement matched with realism, he dwelt more upon the disadvantages which the School might experience through his remaining a German national, than upon his own bruised feelings, though he did not hide the personal side of the matter.

On the 15th January [he wrote] I had been teaching at the School for seven years exactly. And ever since I came, I felt that through my foreign nationality I was in an awkward position as far as my relations to 'modern China' were concerned. At the time when I emigrated to this country, I might have claimed that I was known in China as being distinctly sinophile and as one of the Western Chinese scholars who paid particular attention to modern Chinese publications, both academic and literary. I realised that through my immigration I would have to impose on myself great restraint in this respect and that I should have to make special efforts in order to avoid giving an ambiguous impression. While I proceeded with my teaching of modern Chinese, my publications were therefore devoted exclusively to non-modern subjects such as classical and Buddhist Chinese and Tibetan. Through the war, which has brought practical teaching to the foreground, and even more through its latest phase, which has made China an ally of this country, this restraint has, however, no longer seemed possible. On the other hand the abandonment of this line has also given prominence to the discrepancy between my feelings towards China and the impossibility of putting them into full effect before becoming a naturalised British subject. As you know, I have pointed out the usefulness of the New Official Chinese Latin Script for the teaching of Chinese in the West. A Primer and a pamphlet have been published on this, a reader will be out in a few weeks, and a Chinese-English dictionary and an anthology will follow within this year, I hope. These publications may arouse a certain amount of interest in China, and it would certainly add to their interest

if it could be said that not only was this script taught in our School, but that its propagator had also been awarded British citizenship.

In this self-revealing letter, Simon went on to explain that he was conscious of potential, and crippling, restrictions which might in the future be placed on his teaching. Somehow he must have surmised that officialdom had not fully trusted him, for he wrote:

It may seem as if I am not handicapped at all in my teaching at present in spite of my nationality. But I should like to point out that considerable difficulties exist at least potentially and may in fact crop up at any moment. I may assume that the School must desire their teachers to be able to teach without any limitations either as to the kind of material envisaged for teaching, or to the kind of students entrusted to them, or to the place where the teaching may proceed. No limitations are at present imposed apparently on my teaching of members of his Majesty's forces, but I think such limitations were imposed at some time in the past. [And he concluded:] There is, in fact not one of these plans, and in general not a single one of my present or future activities at the School (including those which are connected with research work and postgraduate training) which is or would not be impeded by my nationality, and none on the other hand which could not be turned to much greater effect by the award of British citizenship.

The Director evidently accepted the cogency of this argument, for he supported Simon's case in a letter to the Home Office, but the application was refused in accordance with wartime policy on the granting of naturalization, and it was not till some time after the end of the war that Simon finally achieved his ambition of obtaining British nationality.

The 'New Official Chinese Latin Script' in which Simon was now publishing was the transcription system known as *Gwoyue Romatzyh*, or GR for short. This system had been developed during Kuo Min Tang days by the eminent Chinese scholar, the late Y. R. Chao (a Corresponding Member of the School and, until his death in 1982, a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy), but, associated as it was with the republican government of Chiang Kai-shek, it could not survive the communist assumption of power in 1949, and its place was ultimately taken by the current official system for transcribing Chinese known as *pinyin*. In the nature of things, no transcription system for Chinese can be both scientifically accurate and easy to use. But GR had one unique characteristic which enhanced its usefulness for pedagogical purposes, and at the same time made it easier to read, write, and type. It dispensed not only with aspirates, as *pinyin* does, but with superscript tone marks, whether accents or figures, as well, and represented

the four tones of standard Chinese by means of systematic spelling devices. Thus, at the mechanical level, it became possible, for the first time, to convey the whole phonological content of a Chinese word on a single line of type. More importantly perhaps even than this, the student became accustomed to think of tone as an inherent feature of the word, not as an afterthought applied to an ideal (and hence non-existent) toneless prototype. Right from the beginning, the student perceived the Chinese sound-system in Chinese, rather than European, terms. To accomplish such a revolutionary step in the representation of Chinese by means of the letters of the English alphabet meant adopting some strange conventions. Certain spelling devices, such as the insertion of the letter *r*, the doubling of certain vowels and consonants, the substitution of one vowel for another, were used, not for their anticipated phonetic effect, but quite artificially, to denote difference of tone. Even though standard Chinese consists, essentially, only of monosyllables, which are themselves limited to consonant plus vowel, or vowel alone, and admit of no closed syllables except those ending in *-n* and *-ng*, the varied structure of the Chinese word made it impossible to restrict the system to four spelling stages, each indicating one of the four tones. The system was much more intricate. Thus, Wade-Giles *hên*<sup>1-4</sup> came out as *hen*, *hern*, *heen*, *henn*, while *huang*<sup>1-4</sup> became *huang*, *hwang*, *hoang*, *huangq*. The principle behind the conventions, and the various conventions themselves, took some getting used to, but once the principle was understood, the details soon fell into place, so skilfully was the system devised. Simon was a great believer in the value of mnemonics, and he worked out a system of mnemonics, in which the consonants of the keywords corresponded, through values given in a substitution-table, with the number of the radical. The meaning of the radical was also associated with that of the keyword. The concept itself is a venerable one. In a learned footnote in his *Beginner's Chinese-English Dictionary*, Simon traced the principle of letter-figure substitution back to one Stanislaus Mink von Wenusheim, who publicized it in 1684. But whether this somewhat strained and artificial word-game ever actually helped any student gain a comprehensive knowledge of the Chinese radicals must be a matter of doubt. Some of the associations were rather far-fetched: thus radical 146, which means 'west', had, as its mnemonic, 'trip (to the West)', and *t*, *r*, and *p* had, respectively, the numerical values 1, 4, and 6. On the other hand, no user of Chao's GR, and I am sure not Simon himself, can have remained unconscious of the mimetic and mnemonic association which seems

to obtain between certain of the spelling conventions and their realization in speech. The doubled vowel used for the third tone in many words, or the added final *h*, the doubled final *n*, or the change of *ng* to *nq* representing the falling fourth tone, somehow seemed to display their mimicry once one had grasped how the scheme worked.

In spite of representations made early in the war by the School, government refused to admit that its reserves of officers expert in Chinese and Japanese was anything but adequate for all foreseeable situations. Japan's entry into the war in December 1941 finally shattered this complacent illusion. A scheme for the award of scholarships in oriental languages to boys still at school was worked out, and approved by the Board of Education in February 1942. A selection board was appointed, under Professor Turner, which considered over 700 applications. More than 150 candidates were interviewed and 74 scholarships were awarded, 16 of them in Chinese. (In passing, we may recall that, once having woken up to the disastrous lack of trained linguists, officialdom did not do things by halves. While thirty scholarships were awarded to boys selected to study Japanese at the School, a separate Japanese language-training unit was set up at Bedford, as part of an inter-services intelligence school, and here, over the next few years, a series of six-month crash courses was run, at first under the late Captain Tuck, RN, and then under one of his first pupils, the late Lieut. E. B. Ceadel, who afterwards became University Librarian at Cambridge.)

The Director of the School, and some of his senior colleagues, had been instrumental in bringing this scholarship scheme into being, but the tasks of working out a syllabus of instruction, organizing the courses, compiling teaching material, and actually doing the teaching, fell, as far as Chinese was concerned, largely upon Simon's shoulders. This first exercise in large-scale language training at the School was followed by other courses for the services and government departments, in both standard Chinese and Cantonese, which continued after the end of the war, and if in no other way than this, Simon amply repaid his adoptive country for its hospitality by his contribution to its war-effort.

In 1947 the University of London established a second Chair of Chinese, to which Simon was appointed with effect from October of that year. Three years later, the School appointed him Acting Head of the Department of the Far East, and in 1952 he succeeded Professor Edwards as Head. During the immediate post-war years several possibilities of moving on from London

presented themselves to him. In 1946 and 1947 he was offered the Chair of Sinology at the University of Berlin, which was situated in the Soviet sector of the city, but he declined. Refusal of this offer may not have taken much consideration: there is no mention of the circumstances in his correspondence with the School which I have seen, and knowledge of the offer comes from a private communication. He was, though, certainly interested in the Chair of Chinese at Oxford, which was advertised in the middle of 1946, though it is not clear whether he allowed his candidature to run the full course. What is quite certain is that he could have been the successor to Gustav Haloun at Cambridge. Approaches were made to him by that University, and he was much tempted to entertain them. But his natural loyalty, reinforced by his consciousness of the value placed upon his continued presence at the School by its Director and Governing Body, persuaded him to close his ears to the siren voices from the Cam. It was not an easy choice, for he felt attracted to Cambridge. As he wrote to the Director:

The talk I had with you confirmed the conclusion I had arrived at independently when thinking this matter over very carefully for more than one month, viz. that I should remain where I am. What you have written about the temptations of Cambridge is only too true. I feel a spell cast around me whenever I am in Cambridge and walk around the colleges, but I have come to the conclusion that this spell—not to mention other temptations—must be resisted and that in these last few years of my career I can serve sinological studies in this country best by remaining in London. I feel fortunate indeed that this decision of mine should agree with what you Sir, and, as you assure me, my colleagues wish me to do. I shall be glad to remain at the School, which to serve I have considered an honour ever since it first offered me academic hospitality.

What the Director of the School had written was, in part: 'I cannot disguise from you my conviction that your acceptance would be disastrous for the Far East Department and a severe blow to the School as a whole.' It would not have been in Simon's character to resist so urgent an appeal from the institution which had first sheltered him.

From September 1948 to August 1949, Simon was granted study leave from the School for the purpose of buying books and renewing contacts in the East. In China he was indeed able to meet several of his old friends from his Exchange Librarian days, but in some ways China itself was a disappointment. The republican government was disintegrating, and its decline was marked

by its failure to deal honestly with the public, a failure which had been only too characteristic of the war years and after. In a long letter to Professor Edwards, Simon described, with distaste, how the authorities were manipulating the currency so as to fleece the general public, Chinese and foreigners alike, and line their own pockets. Prices were being allowed to rise while the rates of exchange for foreign currency were maintained, and there was barefaced swindling over the manipulation of the deadline for the exchange of foreign assets. This cost the holders of foreign currency enormous amounts of money.

I saw X. cashing big packages of Gold Yuan on a Monday morning realising that this (one week's ration only!) will cost the War Office thousands of pounds and nobody profiting from it except the 'Sung Dynasty' in control of the Central Bank of China. In the middle of October when inflation was well on the way I was told by a lady on the Council of YWCA that they changed all their reserves in Gold and in American Dollars on the 30th September as they were told to do, and the next day there came the promulgation of the extension of the period of surrender of these values. This extension was the signal for breaking away from the GY in the North because the people then saw that the Government were dishonest in their practices. I wonder whether China realises to what an extent she has forfeited the sympathies of foreigners by the GY fraud.

In spite of his dislike of spending money in an unorthodox way, Simon was forced to take steps to protect the School's funds, and he paid for many of his book purchases with cheques on Hongkong.

After the dishonest financial policy which I have just described I have no moral qualms either (nobody in fact has!) and even some satisfaction in the idea that this money remains in the sterling area and that it will buy us many more books instead of having simply come to nothing if changed at the official rate.

It was pleasant to meet old friends in China, and useful to make new contacts in Japan, but from the School's point of view the skill with which Simon fulfilled his major task—the purchase of books for its Library—was undoubtedly more significant. In Hongkong he was able to buy most of the important books which had been published during the last two decades by China's two biggest publishing houses, the Shanghai Commercial Press and the Chung Hwa Book Co., both of which had moved their head offices from Shanghai to British territory. At the Apollo Book Store he made substantial purchases of modern literature. There were many bargains to be had in Peking, where books were still cheap.

The old book is cheap in Peking because there are still large stocks of it there and few people who have money to buy. We shall get a good number of Tsongshu's both of works of different authors and collected works of one author. Furthermore I bought all important encyclopaedias which we have not got (except Ming prints) and also bought books on the ancient script which was another serious deficiency in our Library. New gazetteers have also been included, furthermore important modern reference books, a complete series of the Harvard Yenching Indexes, modern periodicals as from 1939. Of single items I mention only the *Ming Shyrluh*.

He also bought Manchu books, and Tibetan and Mongolian blockprints, some already irreplaceable, as the blocks from which they were printed had been used by Japanese soldiers as firewood. In Japan he bought Japanological works and 'a fairly complete collection of Japanese Sinological contributions'. It was not a unique purchasing trip, for Haloun, too, was able to go to China and buy on behalf of the Cambridge University Library, but it was of great importance for the School, which could now face the imminent expansion in Far Eastern studies confident that it had a working and reference library of unparalleled completeness in Europe, and that it would be relatively unaffected by China's approaching isolationism.

The post-war years brought distracting obligations of a different kind, which occupied the attention of the senior staff of the School until well into the 1950s. The Report of the Scarbrough Commission, completed in 1946 and published in 1947, recommended an unprecedented expansion in the provision for the study, at university level, of Oriental, Slavonic, East European, and African languages and cultures. The lion's share of this expansion, as far as Asia and Africa were concerned, was taken up by the School, and Simon was one of those who, having shouldered the burden of the war years, now had to turn his attention to the problem of planning and carrying out the reorganization of Far Eastern studies on a scale never before attempted. As Sir Cyril Philips, subsequently Director of the School, has written:

In defining and applying these plans, especially in recruiting and training young scholars to open up fresh fields of study while simultaneously maintaining the normal routine of university teaching and administration, the whole attention and energy of the senior members of staff was absorbed often at the expense of their own research, and in several instances of their health. The School's debt to a small circle of dedicated heads of departments, not least to Professor Eve Edwards,

Professor John Firth, Professor Walter Simon, and Professor Ida Ward, who, along with the Director carried the burden of the day, was immeasurable.

And indeed, the Department of the Far East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, as it exists today, over twenty years after Simon's retirement, is essentially his creation, even if its shape has been modified in detail and it has sustained some unrepaired losses. In January 1937 Simon was told, in an interview with the then Secretary of the School, G. W. Rossetti, that the staff of the Department would consist in the session 1937-8 of the Professor, the Assistant Lecturer, and himself. In the wake of the implementation of the Scarbrough Commission's recommendations, the Department came to comprise twenty-six established posts. Naturally enough, most appointments were made in the main fields in which research and teaching took place, that is, modern and classical Chinese, and Japanese. But Simon's vision stretched further, and he was able to utilize the opportunities afforded by Scarbrough to promote the study of the 'peripheral' areas of China, that is, Korea, Mongolia, and Tibet. For the first time in the history of the School there was academic coverage of the entire area which the Department was supposed to embrace, and this regardless of whether or not there was likely to be much demand for teaching.

Rapid expansion had, of course, its latent dangers, which are now being realized. War experience had opened the eyes of many young men of scholarly bent, who might otherwise not have encountered the East, to the possibility of applying familiar methods to what were then still exotic fields of study, and their return to civilian life coincided with the comparative wealth of opportunities afforded by the new order of things. Simon, like other heads of departments, could draw on a whole generation of young, prepared talent. But this 'Scarbrough generation' is now approaching retirement in a very different economic climate from that of the imaginative, if austere, post-war years, and the fate of departments like the one Simon once led must to some degree lie in the balance.

Simon's academic research took several directions. His earliest interest was in problems connected with the reconstruction of early stages of the Chinese language. The first tentative steps towards the recovery of the sound-system of what was to be known as Ancient Chinese, the Chinese of about AD 600, had been taken as long ago as the second half of the nineteenth century by men like Edkins and Schaank. More systematic progress was made by

Pelliot and Maspero, who drew up provisional schemes for the interpretation of the Ancient Chinese sound-system. But it was the Swedish scholar, Bernhard Karlgren, who made the subject his own. His systematic recovery of the Ancient Chinese sound-system excited all Sinologists of his generation, and was followed by his reconstruction of the Chinese language as it was a thousand years earlier still—Karlgren's Archaic Chinese. Karlgren's epoch-making studies began to appear during the war years, and in 1926, in *Philology and Ancient China* he accomplished the difficult task of popularizing his remote field of research, explaining the problem itself and what was to be gained from its solution, the methods by which it was being solved, and his results to date. Simon's first publications in the same field consisted of a review which appeared in 1924, of Karlgren's *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese* (Paris, 1923), and two independent articles: 'Die Spaltung der chinesischen Tiefertone' (*Asia Major*, Leipzig, 1927) and 'Zur Rekonstruktion der altchinesischen Endkonsonanten' (*Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen*, 1927-8). In the latter article, as Simon recalled in a review, published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* in 1938 of two later publications by Karlgren, he had accepted the completeness and coherence of the Swedish sinologist's system of reconstruction. In this, he said:

hardly any sound value may be replaced by another without upsetting the whole system. No matter whether one believes, as does the originator probably himself, in the reality of the reconstruction, or whether one considers its sound values rather as values of probability or in part merely as convenient symbols, one has made general use of these reconstructions and cannot be too grateful for the extraordinary trouble which Professor Karlgren has taken in them.

Here is the true voice of the sceptical Simon whom one remembers. Having gratefully acknowledged Karlgren's monumental scheme of reconstruction, he set about refining it, especially with respect to the principles for the recovery of the finals. The difference of opinion between the two eminent Sinologists led to a certain amount of controversy—as Simon wrote, Karlgren 'had at first at least in part, strongly objected to my reconstructions'.

Simon argued that his reconstructions were to some extent vouched for by the Tibetan-Chinese word equations which he had established in his paper 'Tibetisch-Chinesische Wortgleichungen. Ein Versuch' (*MSOS*, 1929, and separately, 1930). This paper, and his *Addenda* to the Reprint of H. A. Jäschke's *Tibetan Grammar*, compiled jointly with A. H. Francke, which also came out in 1929, were his first public excursions into what was

to prove a lifelong interest, and the hobby of his years of retirement—the study of problems of Tibetan philology and linguistics.

No doubt in consequence of his training and experience as a librarian, Simon compiled several articles of a bibliographical nature, in which he summarized and reviewed current trends in, particularly, pedagogical publications. His article ‘Yen-wen dui-dschau und Kokuyaku Kanbun’ (*MSOS*, 1930 and 1931) was a useful synthesis of, and guide to, editions of classical Chinese texts with accompanying modern Chinese, or Japanese, translations. In 1932 and 1934 he was reviewing recent handbooks of the colloquial language of North China: the second part of this double article dealt with seventeen Russian textbooks which had appeared in Harbin between 1930 and 1932, as well as with more accessible works in German and English. A fourth line of research opened in 1933 when Simon made his own contribution to the study of modern Chinese grammar with an article entitled ‘Zur Bildung der antithetischen Doppelfrage im Neuhochchinesischen’ (*Simica*), and in the same year came his first publication in the field of Manchu studies—the contribution to Li’s catalogue mentioned above. In 1934 he returned to Chinese grammar with an analysis of the meaning of the final particle *i* 矣 (*MSOS*). Classical Chinese lacked, as it still does, a comprehensive grammar, and the study of individual particles proved, both before and after the Second World War, one of the most fruitful ways in which self-contained, but systematically linked, attacks could be made upon aspects of that daunting problem. This line of research was resumed after the war, in what was the major work of Simon’s later years—a four-part article entitled ‘The Functions and Meanings of Erl 而’ which appeared in *Asia Major* (by now a British, and no longer a German journal, and edited for several years by Simon himself) in 1952–4.

During the war, Simon’s attention was devoted almost entirely to yet another task, the preparation and publication of practical teaching and reference material. Between 1942 and 1947 there appeared, one after another, *Chinese Sentence Series*; *Chinese National Language (Gwoyue) Reader and Guide to Conversation*; *1200 Chinese Basic Characters*; *How to Study and Write Chinese Characters*; *Structure Drill through Speech Patterns. No. 1. Structure Drill in Chinese* (with T. C. Chao); and, finally, *A Beginner’s Chinese–English Dictionary of the National Language (Gwoyue)*. Most of these ran into second editions, though all have been overtaken by time. Simon’s books are no longer used, for example, at the School where they were developed, but this is a natural process, whose inevitability Simon

himself no doubt accepted with understanding. Fashions in teaching soon change, and those courses which replaced Simon's at SOAS have themselves been replaced. New ideas and new needs in language teaching, a new romanization system accompanied by a script reform in China, the development of the Chinese language under the stress of political revolution, the recent emergence of China from its self-imposed isolation, and the opening up of a Chinese book trade in London, have all combined to alter perspectives. Simon's *Dictionary*, probably the most durable of his wartime products, can still be used, though it has been overtaken by more up-to-date and comprehensive works like the *Pin-yin Chinese-English Dictionary*, but one no longer turns to it as a first resource, as one did thirty years ago.

In the post-war years Simon's researches moved away from pure Sinology. He did, admittedly, contribute an introduction and the romanized Japanese versions to his colleague, Mrs Liu's, *Fifty Chinese Stories*, in 1960, but this was a practical textbook, used for class teaching, not a product of research. His publications began to reflect more and more his preoccupation with Tibetan. There were forays into other fields, the most notable being *Manchu Books in London. A Union Catalogue*, which he produced jointly with Mr Howard Nelson in 1977, but the trend towards Tibetan is unmistakably apparent in the numerous articles, mostly quite short, which he continued to contribute to *Asia Major* and *BSOAS*.

There was, then, no single underlying theme in Simon's work, no single goal towards which it all tended. Things would surely have been rather different had it not been for his exile and the distractions of wartime duties. Time, too, has taken its toll of much of what he published, though individual items still retain their brilliance, and some their utility. I would dare to suggest that it is for a different achievement that he will be remembered, and here I take my cue from the perceptive remark with which Herbert Franke, then Professor of Chinese at Munich, introduced his contribution to the *Festschrift* for Simon's old Professor, Erich Haensch, in 1961. 'Die Bedeutung eines Gelehrten im Rahmen der Entwicklung seiner Wissenschaft darf nicht nur an seinen Veröffentlichungen gemessen werden. Entscheidend für das Fach ist oft das Wirken für die Anerkennung und Durchsetzung einer wissenschaftlichen Disziplin an den Universitäten.'

It is no exaggeration to evaluate Simon, along with Gustav Haloun, as one of the founders of modern, professional British Sinology. To do so is not to denigrate his predecessors at the three great universities, Cambridge, Oxford, and London, which have

been the traditional (though by now not the only) homes of Chinese scholarship, nor to undervalue the contribution to Sinology made by his contemporaries. But it suggests that Simon's achievement was of a different order altogether. Right up to the time of the Second World War, British Sinology had remained, broadly speaking, the preserve of distinguished amateurs, the province of men who, after retiring from active life, and often brilliant careers, in the East, as government servants or missionaries, occupied their latter years in the pursuit of what remained exotic studies, outside the mainstream of university life. There was no academic tradition, in the sense of a continuing line of masters and pupils, constituting vigorous university departments, and enjoying the financial and psychological back-up expected by the older disciplines. Brilliant scholars there were indeed—men like James Legge, Thomas Wade, Herbert Giles, A. C. Moule, and, amongst Simon's contemporaries, the incomparable Arthur Waley. But for one reason or another, personal disinclination or the absence of a supportive climate of opinion, they did not, and could not, found schools. To have done this was Simon's merit.

Simon's tenure of the Chair of Chinese marked a new beginning in that he was, right from the start, a professional scholar, who brought to the study of Chinese in this country the painstaking and systematic methods of German classical philology, and raised the status of his adopted discipline to something like that of older-established fields of study. He, and Haloun, whose tenure of the Chair at Cambridge was disappointingly brief, were, in spite of the personal disaster of lost homeland and shattered ideals, ultimately fortunate in their time. The years of their greatest vigour and creativity coincided with a period of unprecedented expansion in their discipline, and, holding Chairs at two major universities, they could make the most of the opportunities which were presented to them. Government favoured expansion, and provided the funds and fostered the climate of opinion in which it was possible, with some assurance of continuity in policy, to plan for growth, and recruit young scholars and teachers to whom hopes, if not assurance, of careers in the universities could be held out. In Simon's case, some of these young recruits to professional scholarship had even passed through his hands as senior schoolboys. He and Haloun supplied their own, and each other's, universities with lecturers and future professors, and trained up scholars who today occupy Chairs of Sinology across the English-speaking world. To have set authoritative standards of

scholarship and won international recognition for a youthful discipline is no mean claim to remembrance.

Simon retired from the Chair of Chinese in 1960, and in June of that year the University conferred upon him the title of Professor Emeritus, in appreciation and recognition of his distinguished service to itself and his subject. A few days later the School elected him one of its complement of twenty-five Honorary Fellows. Retirement freed him for writing and for taking up visiting appointments. He was Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto in 1961-2, at the Australian National University, Canberra, in 1962, and at Tokyo, Canberra, and Melbourne in 1970. In 1956 he was elected to the British Academy and at the beginning of 1961 his services were publicly recognized when he was appointed CBE. He was also elected an Honorary Research Fellow of the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo. In 1963, part 1 of volume x of *Asia Major*, still edited by his old friend Bruno Schindler, carried a congratulatory address in Latin to him, accompanied by his portrait and a list of the names of his well-wishers, followed by a bibliography of his publications to date, while part 2 carried a congratulatory address in Chinese, composed and written by Mr Lee Yim, a member of his old department at the School, and an authority on oracle-bones. This was in celebration of his seventieth birthday. Ten years later, the School celebrated his eightieth birthday with an issue of its *Bulletin*, part 2 of volume xxxvi, which was inscribed 'In Honour of Walter Simon'. A specially bound copy was presented to him at a little gathering at the School on 26 June, a few days after his birthday. His last public honour was the award of the Triennial Gold Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society, which he received in 1977. From the previous year he had been an Honorary Vice-President of the Society.

These were the official signs of recognition of a distinguished career, which had included, apart from his university duties, such other isolated or continuing activities as representing the School at the International Congress of Orientalists held at Istanbul in 1951; acting as member and chairman of the Editorial Board, and ultimately as editor (1964-75) of the revived *Asia Major*; the Presidency of the Philological Society (1967-70); and Trusteeship of the Institute of Tibetan Studies at Tring. At the personal level he enjoyed the respect, trust, and affection of everyone who came close to him. Arthur Waley knew him as 'a man of exceptional personal charm'. Otto Franke, too, was sensible of his attractive personality, finding him a man of high-minded character (*von vornehmer Gesinnung*) and absolute reliability. Those of us who

belonged to a later generation may have found it less easy to penetrate his reserve, and to establish so direct a contact with him: one was always conscious of the gap in years and wisdom, and the distance in experience, which all his affability could not quite bridge over. There were definite stages of increasing intimacy: the invitation to drop the title of Professor, the use of the Christian name, and, perhaps most moving, the telling of a Jewish joke in German. One could not call Simon withdrawn, but he did give the impression of being rather a private man. Added to that, especially in his later years, his style of conversation became rather indirect. It was not always easy to pick up the thread of his discourse, which seemed on occasions to be no more than the momentary articulation of a continuing stream of thought. Simon was essentially a moral man, considered and deliberate in his actions, which must have been governed by a consistent feeling of responsibility for their outcome. He will indeed be remembered as a man of innate nobility of character.

Walter Simon died on 22 February 1981 at the age of eighty-seven, leaving a widow, Kate, née Jungmann, and two sons.

C. R. BAWDEN