


RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Flowering of British Sinology

T.H. Barrett\* 

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, UK

\*Corresponding author. Email: [tb2@soas.ac.uk](mailto:tb2@soas.ac.uk)

(Received 18 October 2021; revised 23 November 2021; accepted 23 November 2021)

## Abstract

This account of Sinology in the United Kingdom, in part incorporating personal reminiscence, starts with an analysis of the growth of the British library resources necessary to the practice of Sinology, followed by a sketch of the marginality in Britain in the early twentieth century of this type of scholarship. The changes brought about by the military requirements of World War II are seen as foreshadowing an era during which large-scale funding in Asian and other studies briefly allowed Sinology to flourish, after which a failure to understand the benefits of training in a non-spoken language reduced the opportunities for British students to the point where British Sinology is virtually extinct, and the willingness of scholars from elsewhere in Europe to engage with British university life is being sorely tried. The contributions of British Sinology, supported by Chinese and other incomers during its efflorescence, are briefly surveyed.

## Introduction

The narrative that is attempted here takes only a short span of time to examine in detail, in large part because it is the period best known to the narrator, if not in person then at least by hearsay, which as will become clear has been drawn on to fill out the story.<sup>1</sup> Some characteristics of the British university system at the time in question may further help to explain some of the choices made here. A British undergraduate degree at this point was usually based on three years of study of a single subject, extended in the case of Chinese to four. Such a first degree of intensive study was seen at this time as sufficient preparation for doctoral work, which might take a while to complete; meanwhile research could be supported by teaching to undergraduates, given frequently in the form of individual or small group tutorials. Though professors were not as important to the courses of study of the day as they were in countries such as Germany, they nonetheless played an individual leadership role where Chinese was taught that was usually not completely dissimilar. Administrative chores might rotate, as in North American departments, but for the professor of Chinese informal responsibility for planning and fundraising remained a permanent burden. Lecturers too had their parts to play,

<sup>1</sup>To be clear, unattributed material from the mid-twentieth century onward may be taken to derive either from oral tradition or from the author's own personal reminiscences, which in both cases should be dated to after 1967.

and could be present over the long term, often as well-remembered teachers, and perhaps as productive researchers too. But for the most part there was only one Professor of Chinese in the three main universities concerned, and so the story tends to concentrate on those figures, even if the broader inclusion of others might have produced a more nuanced tale and given due credit to a number of excellent scholars, most of whom are not even given passing mention here. Even for the most outstanding Sinologists, moreover, biographical details have not been documented, since these are usually readily available on Wikipedia. The emphasis here is not so much on a sequence of names and publications, and much more on the institutional circumstances that helped or more often hindered them.

Furthermore any attempt at writing a history of British Sinology has also to acknowledge at the outset not simply these frequent hindrances, but also the shifts in the scope of the term during the more than two centuries that educated Britons have attempted to understand China via its literary language. Only gradually did the extraordinary dimensions of the Chinese cultural heritage in that language, and the need to take that written tradition into account even when dealing with the equally rich Chinese legacy in other areas, from material culture to the performing arts, dawn on the British. In large part this was because it was only gradually that they amassed the written sources necessary to gauge the scale of their undertaking. For any Anglophone student intending to explore even the most limited portion of that heritage it is necessary to grasp at least something of the whole, and in no small degree the challenge has been to accumulate the means in the English language that are needed to ease the task of getting the measure of that whole. How educated Chinese into our own times have absorbed the personal knowledge required to draw creatively on that heritage has been to read and to memorize to an extent that seems scarcely credible to younger generations today, even if with regard to the equivalent heritage of Greece and Rome Anglophone scholars in some unusual cases, such as that of Richard Porson (1759–1808), were also able to deploy prodigious quantities of memorized text, in order for example to formulate Porson's law of the final iambic. Any would-be scholar in the Sinophone world to this day has an initial advantage in knowing something of the meaning of the characters used in the earlier language, but for the British the enterprise could not even begin without appropriate lexicographic support, even granted that some pioneers were able to make a certain amount of progress with earlier bilingual materials on Chinese in Latin or other languages.

The first step towards Sinology in Britain thus only became possible with the publication over two centuries ago of the first Anglo-Chinese dictionary by Robert Morrison (1782–1832).<sup>2</sup> But an assiduous student of this massive work would only have been able to place themselves on an equal footing with a Chinese beginner; the task of becoming familiar with the bibliographic landscape of the Chinese tradition further required a major influx of Chinese books into Britain, something more than the dribs and drabs that had been arriving by Morrison's time for about two hundred years. The entire process of the stocking of British libraries with Chinese books is a topic that I attempted to cover several decades ago, though unfortunately while preoccupied all day with work in another area, allowing time only in the night for writing, with an inevitable crop of minor and some major errors resulting, even if the outlines

<sup>2</sup>For the anniversary of this achievement, and an attempt at an overall survey of Morrison's scholarship, see T.H. Barrett, "A Bicentenary in Robert Morrison's Scholarship on China and his Significance for Today," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Ser. 3, 25.4 (2015), 705–16.

of the narrative remain clear enough.<sup>3</sup> For the many details omitted more recent research in Chinese is certainly available, and should be consulted.<sup>4</sup> Here the developments most relevant to the appearance of Sinology have been rechecked, though this focus still tends to perpetuate neglect of actual heroic figures such as James Legge (1815–1897), an inevitable consequence of the inconsequential role that Legge played in building up the bibliographic resources needed to support the further education of Sinologists in Britain. Fortunately Legge's achievements are now thoroughly documented, and the process of Chinese collection development has also become better documented, especially through the work of Andrew West on the Morrison Collection.<sup>5</sup>

### Laying the Foundations: the First Libraries

From this it is clear that as with the dictionary, Morrison's work set Britain off to a surprisingly good start. The restrictions on foreigners trading in Canton in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were considerable, so to amass a collection of books at all was far from easy. But Morrison, as a would-be missionary who hoped to make use of the local booksellers to distribute his Christian translations, seems to have cultivated his links with them over a long period of time.<sup>6</sup> He also established friendly contacts with Canton's religious institutions, especially the main Buddhist temple that also acted as a religious publication center, a connection he also passed on to his son, John Robert Morrison (1814–1843).<sup>7</sup> Morrison senior was in fact attempting something far more ambitious than the creation of a library solely to support Sinology, since with an eye to propagating the Gospel in Chinese he also took an interest in popular culture, including local culture, so his ambition was by the standards of the day nothing less than a full 'Chinese Studies' collection. But he did manage to secure many of the elements required to support a basic curriculum in Sinology, and to bring them to London in 1824. Thus his approximately 900 titles include a set of the "Thirteen Classics," *Shisan jing* 十三經, with commentaries, and also a set of the "Seventeen Histories," *Shiqi shi* 十七史 of Mao Jin 毛晉, though nothing in this category after the tenth century save the *Ming shi* 明史; some supplementary material on the missing period in between he had in an extended edition of the chronological outline *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑒綱目, and also in a set supplementing the "Seventeen Histories" edition, from the same editor. Technical writings show a similar pattern of standard works often present but sometimes absent: he lacks for example the older encyclopedias before the *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖繪, but does have

<sup>3</sup>T.H. Barrett, *Singular Listlessness: A Short History of Chinese Books and British Scholars* (London: Wellsweep, 1989). In reading this as an overall account of British Sinology it has not always been kept in mind that the objective of this unduly hasty survey was in fact confined to providing an account of the acquisition of library resources; any consideration of the uses to which these resources were put remained secondary.

<sup>4</sup>See most notably, Huang Haitao 黃海濤 (Hoito Wong), "Diyi bu Yingguo Hanxue shi zhuanzhu: Ping Xiong Wenhua de *Yingguo Hanxue shi*" 第一部英國漢學史專著: 評熊文華的《英國漢學史》, *Jiuzhou xuelin* 九州學林 25 (2010), 298–323, a well-informed review that adds substantially to our knowledge.

<sup>5</sup>Andrew C. West, *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection of Chinese Books* (London: SOAS, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>Christopher A. Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 152–53.

<sup>7</sup>Yeung, Man-Shun: "Buddhist-Christian Encounters: Robert Morrison and the Haichuang Buddhist Temple in Nineteenth-Century Canton," in *The Church as Safe Haven: Christian Governance in China*, edited by Lars Peter Laamann and Joseph Tse-hei (Leiden, 2018), 71–100.

the first edition and supplement to the *Peiwen yunfu* 佩文韻府, the awe-inspiring eighteenth-century reference work that gives sources for some 700,000 phrases of two characters or more. Of poetry and prose literature he secured a copy of the *Wenxian wenxuan* 文選, but the selection of individual authors' works is very poor, even for the great names of the Tang, with no Wang Wei 王維, Li Bai 李白, Du Fu 杜甫, or Bai Juyi 白居易, though somehow Li Shangyin 李商隱 (ca. 813–858) did make it to London. Finally the number of “collectanea” or series prints in *congshu* 叢書 includes some useful sets such as the *Zhibuzuzhai congshu* 知不足齋叢書, containing 187 academically very valuable titles, and the chronologically more restricted *Han-Wei congshu* 漢魏叢書, providing eighty more, to say nothing of other rich collections. Fortunately Morrison was able to include the very useful bibliography giving the contents of these and 292 other collections, the *Huike shumu hebian* 彙刻書目合編.

But this is the only bibliography: nowhere do we find such indispensable works as the eighteenth-century catalogue of the carefully selected imperial library, the *Sikuquanshu zongmu* 四庫全書總目, which in its various forms served as a basic guide for his Chinese contemporaries. And above all his extraordinary efforts came close to proving pointless when nobody, not Oxford or Cambridge nor the British Museum, could see any point in taking in such a mass of what his contemporaries considered to be completely useless books. When he went back to China they languished in storage provided by his missionary society until in 1836, two years after his death, public subscription raised sufficient funds to recompense his widow and donate them to University College, London; the college also agreed to support in the short term another returned missionary, Samuel Kidd (1799–1843), the first teacher of James Legge. The outbreak of the first Opium War and the British discovery that they were extraordinarily reliant on John Robert Morrison at least meant that when he died in the middle of the conflict less than three months after Kidd, the British government had learned enough to divert his collection to the library to join the meagre holdings built up by donation and by looting before 1847.<sup>8</sup> It is presumably to the younger Morrison that the British nation owed its first copy of the *Siku quanshu zongmu* and the first full copy of the original *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, though Song history and Tang poetry remained a weak point, and even the “Complete Prose of the Tang Dynasty,” *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, seems to have been a very defective copy.<sup>9</sup> But whereas his father's collection seems only to have had a “severely abridged” edition of the *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 encyclopedia of government, long a mainstay of European scholarship on China, the son's legacy seems to have been responsible for the arrival of several copies of the full text in London.<sup>10</sup>

The Opium Wars eventually seems to have prompted some curiosity in Oxford as to what Chinese books they actually had in the Bodleian, and in 1876 the results were published, revealing fewer than 300 titles, even counting missionary translations into Chinese and also a number of Japanese works, though some interesting rarities deriving from a medical collection that had reached Europe in the early seventeenth century perhaps partially redeemed the banality of the whole.<sup>11</sup> No wonder that in 1882 the university was prepared to pay no less than £110 for a substantial collection from the

<sup>8</sup>Robert Kennaway Douglas, *Catalogue of Chinese Printed Books, Manuscripts and Drawings in the Library of the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1877), [v].

<sup>9</sup>Douglas, *Catalogue of Chinese Printed Books*, 7, 194, 198.

<sup>10</sup>West, *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection*, 47; Douglas, *Catalogue of Chinese Printed Books*, 150.

<sup>11</sup>Joseph Edkins, *A Catalogue of Chinese Works in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877).

missionary Alexander Wylie (1815–1887).<sup>12</sup> Wylie was a missionary in the same mold as Morrison, but perhaps because he did not spend his career pent up in Canton and Malacca, but rather kept more than busy organizing the translation and publication of copious materials from English into Chinese, the library that he bequeathed to Oxford, while showing evidence of many intelligent choices, is less impressive than Morrison's. His collection on epigraphy, one of the glories of Chinese scholarship, is much better, and he does have the key catalogues, plus a full version for at least the continuation of the *Wenxian tongkao*. But the weaknesses of the London collections are not remedied: there is no *Song shi* 宋史; there is very little on poetry of any sort. It is a pity that no research has been published as far as I am aware on what resources James Legge used for his translations, beyond what he tells us in some detail himself in his introductory surveys, since the Wylie collection can only have offered limited support to his work. Wylie's most important contribution to Sinology was perhaps his *Notes on Chinese Literature: With Introductory Remarks on the Progressive Advancement of the Art; And a List of Translations from the Chinese into Various European Languages*, in which he deployed his knowledge of Chinese bibliography to address the problem outlined in his opening remarks:

Most students of Chinese literature, at the commencement of their career, must have felt themselves frequently arrested in their readings, by the occurrence of proper names, and quotations from books, to which they could find no clue without the assistance of a native scholar; and it may be, were unconscious that they were dealing with the names of books, persons, or places.<sup>13</sup>

His 300 pages at least now provided some sort of map, though of course map is not territory.

Only in 1886 did a substantial portion of this territory fall under British academic jurisdiction, and this happened at Cambridge, up till this point even less impressive than Oxford in its support of Chinese learning. Thomas Francis Wade (1818–1895) had pursued a military career that during the first Opium War drew him into interpreting and diplomacy, but he had in passing kept three terms at Trinity College, Cambridge, and on his retirement back to Britain after forty years of service in China it occurred to him that the library he had built up might be of value to his university, even though initially it had been built up for purely practical purposes of the type described by Wylie. Addressing the Vice-Chancellor he writes:

The library was collected, as I think you know, during a long term of public service in China. It was commenced solely with a view to my own security as a translator for although our dictionaries are not wholly useless, they are singularly defective. We all have, and for many years we shall have to rely no little upon the oral exposition of the native assistants with whom we study; wonderful repertoires, but not always conscientious exponents; and I early discovered that nicety of translation was not to be insured without reference to the Chinese author responsible for

<sup>12</sup>David Helliwell, *A Catalogue of the Old Chinese Books in the Bodleian Library, Volume 2: Alexander Wylie's Books* (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 1985), v.

<sup>13</sup>Alexander Wylie, *Notes on Chinese Literature: With Introductory Remarks on the Progressive Advancement of the Art; And a List of Translations from the Chinese into Various European Languages* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), [i].

the text before me. If in any instance my translations into English have any merit, I ascribe it to the fact that my assistants were, many of them, above average and that, whether good or indifferent, my library enabled me to gauge the accuracy of their explanations.<sup>14</sup>

In short, Wade was attempting no exploration of the Chinese heritage out of any sense of intellectual curiosity; as a practical man his only object was to follow the advice of Martin Routh (1755–1854) to verify his references.

But there is no doubt that Wade's collection, of which he remained the curator with the unpaid post of professor from 1888, marked a clear advance over those of Morrison or Wylie. Wade had been involved in training several decades of young British interpreters, and probably had had more than enough of such endeavors, so notoriously in his inaugural lecture he discouraged the notion that anyone should study with him at Cambridge. Embarking on a new career at the age of seventy, he only half-promised (and did not deliver) what he felt the United Kingdom lacked, namely a decent history of China. Though during the early years of his professorship he remained active in the Royal Asiatic Society, in terms of publications his final years bore no further fruit, and it fell to his successor, Herbert Giles (1845–1935), to publish the catalogue of his library in 1898, retaining the practical arrangement of the books that Wade had imposed upon it.<sup>15</sup> This shows that Wade not only had an eye for basic texts of the histories and so forth, but also for Qing scholarship commenting on the heritage of earlier times. Substantial digests of early material lacking in other British collections are certainly to be found here, too, in compilations such as the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 encyclopedia, and its companion repository of anecdotal material, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記; though for example individual Tang literary works are still not much in evidence, a set of the "Complete Poetry of the Tang," *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, effectively deals with but half of that problem: Tang prose, too, was never without its admirers.

### Putting sinological collections to use?

Giles had been a less than amenable subordinate to Wade in his earlier days in the consular service in China, so his remarks on his predecessor generally tend towards the acerbic, but there is no mistaking his appreciation of the Wade library. In a series of introductory lectures given at Columbia University in 1902 and published in the same year, he devoted an entire session to describing the collection section by section, noting that he spent a part of almost every day in it, and commending it to his hosts as the very model of what any worthwhile university should aspire to possess. His lecture introduces the main classes of Chinese books, explains the value of encyclopedias and the prevalence of series publications, and spends quite some time extolling the merits of the *Peiwen yunfu*.<sup>16</sup> Here there was plainly a resource for the education of British Sinologists. In the eyes of one outside observer, writing on the eve of the donation of the Wade books to Cambridge, such an education would not have gone amiss.

<sup>14</sup>See pp. 407–8 of Charles Aylmer, "Sir Thomas Wade and the Centenary of Chinese Studies at Cambridge (1888–1988)," *Chinese Studies* / 漢學研究 7.2 (1989), 405–22.

<sup>15</sup>Herbert A. Giles, *A Catalogue of the Wade Collection of Chinese and Manchu Books in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898).

<sup>16</sup>Herbert Allen Giles, *China and the Chinese* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1902), 39–72.

Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (1857–1928), to be sure, was an even more prickly individual than Giles, a Scots-educated Penang Chinese who threw in his lot with the Manchu regime; he represented no point of view but his own, yet his remarks as a well-informed outsider who was personally acquainted with Giles over many years, and who shared the Englishman’s unusually anticlerical sentiments, are not without interest.<sup>17</sup> In discussing “Chinese Scholarship” among Westerners he speaks of Morrison with respect, but while he commends one or two French and German scholars, most of Morrison’s British successors are found wanting, even if Wade’s language textbooks are assigned a certain value. Otherwise, “we feel that the terminology employed by Dr. Legge is harsh, crude, inadequate, and in some places, almost unidiomatic”; moreover “it is extraordinary that neither in his notes nor in his dissertations has Dr. Legge let slip a single phrase or sentence to show what he conceived the teaching of Confucius really to be as a philosophic whole”; as for Wylie’s book on Chinese sources, it is “a mere catalogue, and not a book with any literary pretensions at all.” Giles he likes for his “clear, vigorous, and beautiful style,” but regrets that mostly this has been wasted on the wrong topics. A poor English translation of Zhuangzi he pounces on and tears limb from limb.<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere in his writings Giles, too, is badly mauled: “in all that Dr. Giles has written, there is not a single sentence which betrays the fact that Dr. Giles has conceived or even tried to conceive the Chinese literature as a whole”; his dictionary “is merely a collection of Chinese phrases and sentences”; his biographical dictionary “shows an utter lack of the most ordinary judgment.”<sup>19</sup>

Some of this may seem slightly captious: if Legge offered no more than a philosophically neutral translation, then he was wise not to link his work to any temporarily prevailing understanding of Confucius, and especially not to that espoused in a completely individual fashion by Gu Hongming; if Wylie modestly did not claim for his work any greater literary value than that of a catalogue, then I fear that what Gu is saying is that only he (and sporadically Herbert Giles) can render stylish Chinese into stylish English. And if Giles by Gu’s account only approached Chinese literature by bits and pieces and lacks judgment, this was no doubt a good way to assert that despite his origins on the periphery of Chinese culture, Gu had unlike the Englishman mastered the requisite knowledge and understanding of that culture to inhabit it completely and naturally, a condition which actually he had been obliged to work rather hard to achieve. But while his criticisms tell us more about Gu than about his targets, he knew well enough that their aspirations to learning were in Chinese terms risible; at best they could with some help translate the letter of what was put before them in Chinese, without in his view grasping anything of the spirit. In the final analysis, though, that was all their work in China—whether as consuls, missionaries, or businessmen—demanded; why probe further?

And as Giles found out after his arrival in Cambridge, teaching a slim but steady trickle of such people to speak, read, and translate was what the university now demanded of him. His memoirs reveal only one student with an interest in Chinese

<sup>17</sup>For a recent study of Gu, see Chunmei Du, *Gu Hongming’s Eccentric Chinese Odyssey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); on p. 71 the friendship between Gu and Giles is dated back to 1879. Giles was the son of an Anglican vicar unfairly treated by his church, and never held back in his opposition to Christian missions, whereas most non-missionary Britons in Asia tended to at least keep quiet on the topic, while many were of course in sympathy with missionary aims.

<sup>18</sup>Ku, Hung-Ming, *The Spirit of the Chinese People* (Peking: The Commercial Press, 1922), 123–32.

<sup>19</sup>Ku, *Spirit of the Chinese People*, 116.

culture as such, the notorious Sir Edmund Backhouse (1873–1944).<sup>20</sup> Though Backhouse arrived in mid-1898 and soon left to head out to China, it would seem that he stayed long enough to see the value to Giles of the Wade bequest, and after apparently exploiting the opportunities afforded by the chaos of the Allied intrusion into Beijing of 1900 to lay his hands on a considerable quantity of fine books, he did not scruple to use these assets in his never-ending schemes and fantasies; indeed, it is these books that form the most tangible memorial of the man. His first ploy in 1902 was to inform Giles of his acquisitions; his second, in 1903 was to offer as a potential legacy not just the books but also £1,000 to support Chinese Studies at Cambridge; in 1904 all correspondence on this matter then ceased. Giles did in 1908 through his son Lionel Giles (1875–1928) learn that some of the books were for sale in London, and managed to raise the money to buy them so as to make good several of the remaining gaps in the Cambridge collection, including an undamaged copy of the *Quan Tang wen* and the collected works of several Tang authors.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile the lure of the money offered had induced Giles to introduce Chinese as an examination subject, while in 1906 representations particularly from Japanese students persuade the university to accept Classical Chinese examinations in lieu of Latin for their entrance qualification.<sup>22</sup> So Giles stayed busy, while Backhouse retained enough of his booty to involve himself with Oxford, eventually donating between 1913 and 1922 a very large number of books to Oxford, with an eye to securing a professorship in the manner of Wade.

An examination of this collection as reconstituted from the Bodleian holdings suggests that he had laid his plans well for the professorship that turned out never to be his.<sup>23</sup> He had, for example, retained a copy of the *Quan Tang wen*, and had also kept back a copy of the compilation that gathered together all the prose pieces preceding the Tang, which is almost three quarters of its size. Several of the imprints date to after the Boxer troubles, something which suggests that he continued to build his collection by conventional means even when the acquisition of looted fine editions was no longer an option. In one or two cases he plainly slipped up in what he offered for sale in 1908, not retaining, for example, a copy of the “Collected Works” of Li Bai 李白 (701–762), an oversight that had still not been corrected in Oxford by 1936.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile in London less progress had been made, though as early as 1877, the date of the first catalogue at the British Museum, that institution had paid no less than £1,500 for an eighteenth-century copy of the massive printed encyclopedia *Gujin Tushu jicheng* in over 100 million Chinese characters, an aid to instant erudition so basic that later editions were eventually added to the other libraries considered here.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup>See, on Sir Edmunds studies with Giles, pp. 37–39 of Charles Aylmer, “The Memoirs of H. A. Giles,” *East Asian History* 13/14 (1997), 1–90.

<sup>21</sup>Herbert A. Giles, *Supplementary Catalogue of the Wade Collection of Chinese and Manchu Books in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915).

<sup>22</sup>See pp. 62–64 of Koyama Noboru: “Japanese Students in Cambridge During the Meiji Era,” in *Fifty Years of Japanese at Cambridge, 1948–98: A Chronicle with Reminiscences*, edited by Richard Bowring (Cambridge: Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge, 1998), 61–68.

<sup>23</sup>David Helliwell, *A Catalogue of the Old Chinese Books in the Bodleian Library, Volume 1: The Backhouse Collection* (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 1983).

<sup>24</sup>Xiang Da 向達, *Tangdai Changan yu Xiyu wenming* 唐代長安與西域文明 (Beijing: Sanlian, 1979), 618.

<sup>25</sup>Michael Loewe, “The Origins and Development of Chinese Encyclopaedias,” *China Society Occasional Paper* 25 (London: The China Society, 1987), 13.



Unfortunately instant erudition was in a sense as much as was required, in a nation whose citizens involved in Chinese affairs might, if they acquired enough of a command of the documentary Chinese of the day, pause on occasion to render some more engaging Chinese material into English. In his retirement from the consular duties that marked his early years Herbert Giles was even able by 1901 to string together enough material from Chinese sources to constitute a history of Chinese literature of sorts.<sup>26</sup> Beyond this, British experts on China by the beginning of the twentieth century knew enough to be able to turn in an essay on the elaphure or similar short pieces, drawing on the *Gujin tushu jicheng*. But for the most part the vast record of human experience preserved in Chinese sources interested them not at all; that was for others, French, German, or Italian, to worry about. To be able to catch an allusion when making a translation was one thing; to catch the temper of a civilization over time was quite another. Missionary scholarship, too, for all the extraordinary achievements of a James Legge, likewise showed itself capable of supplementing his work in the translation of the *Yi Li* by the Rev. John Clendinning Steele (1868–?), but not going beyond it: for the imaginative analysis of ancient China one had to look to the work of a Henri Maspero (1883–1945) or Marcel Granet (1884–1940).<sup>27</sup> One or two Britons during this period who came from a missionary background had the considerable advantage of having been brought up in China, so when collaborating with French scholars who lacked such a childhood were able to produce a better level of scholarship, as in the case of the work of A.C. Moule (1873–1957) and Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) on Marco Polo. The fact that Moule had known the city of Hangzhou since he was a boy and had besides acquired an excellent knowledge of Chinese made their joint effort unusually productive, while even Moule's individual efforts show the benefits of his upbringing.<sup>28</sup>

### Britain Between the Wars

But Moule spent most of the latter half of his life as a country vicar; universities might keep someone with a command of Chinese handy, as Cambridge called upon him to take the place of Giles for five years, but they did not expect much in the way of scholarship in most cases, and in most cases they did not get it. Museums and art galleries were if anything somewhat worse: Leigh Ashton at the Victoria and Albert Museum (1897–1983), for example, could evidently publish on Chinese art objects without bothering to deal with any inscriptions in Chinese thereupon.<sup>29</sup> Arthur Waley (1889–1966) was unusual in combining an initial career at the British Museum with that of a translator from Japanese and Chinese; his command of Japanese through private study enabled him from the start to challenge Giles as a translator through his access to Japanese expertise on Chinese literature, even if there are signs in his early work that his reach at first somewhat exceeded his grasp.<sup>30</sup> Only after leaving the Museum in 1930 was

<sup>26</sup>Lingjie Ji, "In Their Own Words: British Sinologists' Studies on Chinese Literature, 1807–1901" (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2017).

<sup>27</sup>John C. Steele, *The I-Li, or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial* (London: Probsthain, 1917).

<sup>28</sup>A.C. Moule, *Quinsai, with Other Notes on Marco Polo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

<sup>29</sup>Leigh Ashton and Basil Gray, *Chinese Art* (London, Faber and Faber, 1935).

<sup>30</sup>As may be gathered from T.H. Barrett, "Arthur Waley, Xu Zhimo, and the Reception of Buddhist Art in Europe: A Neglected Source," *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 1.1 (2018), 226–47, and "Herbert Giles as Reviewer," in *Scholarly Personae in the History of Orientalism, 1870–1930*, edited by Christiaan Engberts and Herman Paul (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 118–42.

he able to exploit the bibliographical resources then present in London to develop a career as a Sinologist worthy of the name, eventually mixing translation with studies giving much more of the historical context of the material translated. The library of the School of Oriental and African Studies had by this point been augmented by donations from the Shanghai Scottish potentate Frederick Anderson (1855–1940) and two of his Chinese friends, Yu Bingham 郁屏翰 (1853–1918) and Zheng Liangyu 鄭良裕 (1866–1920), plus the Daoist Canon and the indispensable photolithographic reprint series *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊.<sup>31</sup>

Arthur Waley was not quite the only Briton to be exploiting the materials now available in the capital. Evangeline Dora Edwards (1888–1957) had started her Chinese studies in Beijing as a missionary, briefly acting as the head of a teachers' training college in Shenyang before returning to the United Kingdom to start work as a SOAS language teacher in 1921. She did not cease, however, to educate herself, and after acquiring an external BA and MA from the University of London went on to achieve a doctorate for her work on the *Tangdai congshu* 唐代叢書, an 1806 collection of short (or abbreviated) miscellaneous works of Tang date first published in 1792 that had been in London since it was originally brought from China by Robert Morrison. She also drew on the Morrison legacy by translating, with the Reader in Malay C.O. Blagden (1864–1949), two of the early Ming interpreters' manuals that Morrison had obtained for his collection, covering Chinese-Malay and Chinese-Cham vocabularies.<sup>32</sup> Undoubtedly, however, her finest hour came during World War II, when once again calling on the talents required of her during her early years as a headmistress, she organized all the language teaching for Japanese suddenly demanded by the war effort, an outstanding achievement vital to Britain's eventual successful prosecution of its resistance for which she never received any appropriate recognition.<sup>33</sup>

But several years before the British government eventually listened to the urgings of mere academics and started to take the problem of understanding the languages of East Asia seriously, the rise of Fascism in Europe had already made its impact on the study of China in the United Kingdom. Forced out of university life in Germany, many experts on China were obliged to forge new careers abroad, and Cambridge and London were fortunate to acquire the talents of Gustav Haloun (1898–1951) and Walter Simon (1893–1981) respectively.<sup>34</sup> The latter scholar in particular proved versatile enough to turn his hand to the production of teaching materials and even an introductory dictionary for language learners, since Chinese as well as Japanese were needed for the furtherance of British collaboration with its Chinese allies.<sup>35</sup> But the conclusion of the war saw for the first time a realization of the myopia that had long prevailed in the provision of the languages of the wider world in Britain, and the launching of an ambitious plan to address the problem, since lives had undoubtedly been lost in the

<sup>31</sup>See, on these developments, pp.183–84 of Robert I. Crane, "News of the Profession," *Journal of Asian Studies* 17.1 (1957), 173–92.

<sup>32</sup>Walter Simon, "Obituary: Evangeline Dora Edwards," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22.1 (1958), 220–24; West, *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection*, 23.

<sup>33</sup>Peter Kornicki, *Eavesdropping on the Emperor: Interrogators and Codebreakers in Britain's War with Japan* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2021), 68, 292.

<sup>34</sup>Martin Kern, "The Emigration of German Sinologists 1933–1945: Notes on the History and Historiography of Chinese Studies," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118.4 (1998), 507–29, provides the overall academic context to the arrival of Haloun and Simon.

<sup>35</sup>See p. 473 of C.R. Bawden, "Ernst Julius Walter Simon, 1893–1981," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 67 (1981), 459–77.

early stages of the war as a result of the persistent neglect up to that point even of the School of Oriental and African Studies, which had been founded with some reluctance in 1917 with the aim of supplying such needs.<sup>36</sup> The scale of the proposals, contained in a report of a committee under the chairmanship of the Earl of Scarbrough (1896–1969), a former Governor of Bombay, covered a wide range of East European, African, and Asian languages, proved to be staggering even to the French, who had sustained since the times of the first Jesuit missions the best tradition of Sinology in Europe.<sup>37</sup> Here at last was the governmental support that made a flowering of Sinology possible, undergirded by support for library resources that Haloun and Simon exerted themselves to deploy as effectively as they could. Under the leadership from 1947 of the American Homer H. Dubs (1892–1969), like Moule a onetime missionary born of missionary parents in China, Oxford also got to participate in this bounty.

It was this institutional setting that allowed the efflorescence in due course of British scholarship in Sinology, and it is on the period after 1947 that the remainder of these remarks concentrate; I have not thought it improper to strike a personal note in describing many of those concerned, vividly remembered as they are as admired teachers and colleagues. No claim is made here, however, that this rapid expansion resulted in completely unalloyed benefits. Some of the inherent problems emerged in the course of time; some perhaps became apparent quite quickly. Possible academic careers now beckoned for those who before the war had been engaged with Asia in other ways, for example Victor Purcell (1896–1965), who had learned some Chinese in China before becoming a colonial official in Malaysia, or S. Howard Hansford (1899–1973), who had been in the art business in China. Purcell, who was an effective parodist of the style of T.S. Eliot, had even published in Singapore a slim volume on Chinese verse in his youth, but it seems to have been a callow effort compared with the work of Waley.<sup>38</sup> As a lecturer on Far Eastern history at Cambridge he produced a monograph on the Boxers that lists some Chinese sources, but an older colleague informed me that he had as a young scholar been asked by Purcell to supply these in order to enhance the apparent erudition of the work. As for Hansford, another much older colleague relayed to me the information that Hansford had admitted to him that his actual career in China had been that of a tomb robber. Derogatory whispers of this sort are for better or worse not uncommon in Sinology, and perhaps not always without foundation.

### The Era of Expansion

Yet the Scarbrough expansion also provided an opportunity for bright young men and women who had learned something of East Asia through wartime language training, including often for those who learned a number of Chinese characters through their engagement in studying Japanese, to pursue any interests they may have developed in the culture of the area on special studentships designed to launch solidly based research careers. They were also fortunate in that the Scarbrough funding allowed them to be joined by several well-educated Chinese scholars whom the war or its aftermath had brought to Britain and who stayed on to pursue careers as Sinologists. During

<sup>36</sup>Ian Brown, *The School of Oriental and African Studies: Imperial Training and the Expansion of Learning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 7–156.

<sup>37</sup>Barrett, *Singular Listlessness*, 102.

<sup>38</sup>I have not seen Purcell's slim volume, but note the description in Lan Jiang, *A History of Western Appreciation of English-translated Tang Poetry* (Berlin: Springer, 2018), 180–88.

the war itself Simon had found assistance in his language teaching from the writer Xiao Qian 蕭乾 (1910–1999), who was invited in from his post as a journalist in Hong Kong in 1939; but he eventually returned to full-time journalism, to Hong Kong, and ultimately to China, declining Haloun's attempt to lure him back in 1949 to teach in Cambridge.<sup>39</sup> Haloun had been no luckier with Ji Xianlin 季羨林 (1911–2009), the great Chinese Indologist, whom he had likewise tried to recruit to Cambridge, but after many years in Germany Ji also preferred to head for home.<sup>40</sup> In 1953 Cambridge succeeded at last in securing longer term expertise from H.C. Chang 張心滄 (1923–2004), who had already gained a doctorate in English literature from Edinburgh University, but who came from a scholarly family steeped in traditional learning; his father, Zhang Qihuang 張其鏗 (1877–1927), a 1904 Qing *jinshi*, had published a study of the *Mozi* 墨子 in 1924.<sup>41</sup>

Simon looked to Hong Kong students brought to Britain by the war to provide the necessary learning to support his young British scholars. Katherine Po Kan Whitaker 賴寶勤 (1912–2003) had already gained an Oxford degree in English and returned to Hong Kong to teach that subject before arriving once more in the United Kingdom; in 1945 her teaching ability started to be deployed to supplement the SOAS teaching in Mandarin with Cantonese, and in 1952 she completed a doctorate on the phonology of that language, eventually providing doctoral guidance in Tang poetry too.<sup>42</sup> With a Glasgow postdoctoral qualification in philosophy D.C. Lau 劉殿爵 (1921–2010) seems to have avoided having to make any contribution to Cantonese teaching but rather to have concentrated on early Chinese thought, with conspicuously positive results for the English reader, thanks to his meticulously clear translations. Though younger Sinophone scholars continued to enhance the provision of teaching of Sinology at SOAS into the twenty-first century, his departure for the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1978 marked the end of a Golden Age in London.<sup>43</sup> Oxford, too, had the benefit of a noted Chinese expert from 1948 to 1962 in the person of the outstanding literary researcher Wu Shih-chang 吳世昌 (1908–1986), and on his return to China they seem to have turned to the remarkable if biographically somewhat mysterious Chinese pioneer in the study of Buddhist logic, Richard S.Y. Chi (1919–1986), who had however left for the USA by 1965.<sup>44</sup>

Given the presence of these thoroughly bilingual Chinese luminaries during the period of flowering it might be more proper to speak of Sino-British Sinology. But in part it is what the raw language recruits of the wartime emergency made of the input of these indispensable mentors that gives the publications of the age a special quality. Exactly how many of the young people of the early 1940s parlayed the broadening of their linguistic horizons for military purposes into a career in Sinology is hard to say: not all achieved prominence in the study of China, but either returned to their original studies in ancient or modern European languages or developed their Japanese

<sup>39</sup>Hsiao Ch'ien, Jeffrey Kinkley, trans., *Traveller Without a Map* (London: Hutchinson, 1990), 68–70, 171–72.

<sup>40</sup>Zhang Guanglin 張光璘, *Ji Xianlin Xiansheng 季羨林先生* (Beijing: Renmin jiaotong, 2019), 197–98.

<sup>41</sup>Yan Lingfeng 嚴靈峰, *Zhou Qin Han Wei zhuzi zhijian shumu 周秦漢魏諸子知見書目*, vol. 3 (Taipei: Cheng-chung shu-chü, 1977), 487–88.

<sup>42</sup>Huang, "Diyi bu Yingguo Hanxue shi," 304.

<sup>43</sup>Chan Hok-lam 陳學霖, ed., "In Memoriam D. C. Lau," *Journal of Chinese Studies/Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao 中国文化研究所學報* 51 (2010), xii–24.

<sup>44</sup>Huang, "Diyi bu Yingguo Hanxue shi," 306; Richard S.Y. Chi, *Buddhist Formal Logic* (London: Luzac, 1969), lxxii.

interests, or even quite unexpected new specializations, appearing like their eminent fellows in Wikipedia but with rather different labels. M.A.K. Halliday (1925–2018), for example, even taught Chinese for a while at Cambridge before becoming a celebrated name in linguistics, while the minutes of the degree committee in Oriental Studies at Cambridge revealed to my startled eyes that the celebrated Mongolist Charles Bawden (1924–2016) had originally been registered for a doctorate in early twentieth century Chinese history but had according to this record failed to find sufficient materials on this period to hand: when I challenged him on this rather improbable circumstance he told me that archives such as committee minutes do not reveal the whole story; I could not press him to elaborate, especially since the change of plan had certainly proved the right one for him.

### The Sinologists of Britain

The senior member of the Sinology group was Angus Graham (1919–1991). Born in Penarth, he had moved to Malaysia as a young child, but had returned on the death of his father. The physicist Sir Brian Pippard (1920–2008) recalled from his own childhood at the same school in Penarth, where they briefly overlapped, how some of the village children did not accept this outsider back in their midst, and how their irrational hostility baffled him. His brilliant and inquiring mind took him to a degree in Oxford in theology, which did not satisfy him. But wartime language study opened up for him new intellectual vistas, and a post at SOAS in the Scarbrough era allowed him to undertake the study of the Chinese thought of the Song period, initially under the guidance of E.D. Edwards, after which his research, where not concerned with Chinese poetry and its translation, tended to focus on the thought and language of the pre-imperial period, when the possible influences of Indo-European languages via Buddhism might be discounted; the connection between the two remained a theme throughout his research. For better or worse, the shadows of Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941) and his kind fell across his work in a way they did not for his Chinese contemporaries, however learned. Gifted besides with a willingness to read and translate widely, bolstered by a good set of concordances, he was able to deploy the analytical techniques acquired at Oxford for reading ancient texts to interrogate the sources for early China in ways far more penetrating than most Anglophone Sinologists other than Waley were accustomed to do.<sup>45</sup> In time his publications attracted the attention of younger scholars in America and continental Europe, though of the few who sought his guidance in his homeland, none stayed the course. By contemporary standards his work is doubtless ripe for re-examination, but this is a tribute it richly deserves: with one or two North American colleagues of the same generation he showed that the texts of early China are worth thinking about carefully as well as translating.<sup>46</sup>

Edwin G. Pulleyblank (1922–2013) was a Canadian, a graduate in Classics from the University of Alberta; his route to learning Japanese seems to have been via intelligence work on Italian.<sup>47</sup> At SOAS his teacher was John Kennedy Rideout (1912–1950), whose all too brief life is shrouded in mystery. Peter Kornicki deduces that Rideout arrived in

<sup>45</sup>Harold D. Roth, *A Companion to Angus C. Graham's Chuang Tzu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 182.

<sup>46</sup>For recent appraisals of his work, but including none by any British scholar, see Carine Defoort and Roger T. Ames, eds., *Having a Word with Angus Graham, At Twenty-Five Years into His Immortality* (Albany: State University of New York, 2018).

<sup>47</sup>Kornicki, *Eavesdropping on the Emperor*, 87.

SOAS in the mid-1930s to study Chinese and Japanese, and that he was involved in intelligence before he became a teacher.<sup>48</sup> George Weys (1923–2018), another wartime student who went on to a long teaching career deeply appreciated by generations of students at SOAS, remembered him as “apparently a former Classicist, a severe man who one day announced to the class that you too may one day leave all you know and move to another country.” The country was Australia; he had accepted a professorship at Sydney. But on arrival he found many Japanese books in the library but only one Chinese book, which, he presumed, was there by mistake. Despairing of meaningful work in such circumstances, he left after a year for a professorship in Hong Kong, but disappeared suddenly soon after his arrival and was discovered drowned shortly thereafter.<sup>49</sup> Rideout’s interests were in the Tang period, presumably through the influence of Eve Edwards, since neither Simon nor Haloun were concerned about what was to them a late and doubtless decadent period.

Pulleyblank’s study of the background to the An Lushan 安祿山 Rebellion of the mid-Tang, started under Rideout’s direction, established him as an authority on Tang history; it also allowed him, because of the Inner Asian connections of the rebellion, to develop his philological interests, especially in the contacts of Chinese with the Indo-European languages of the area, and over time he became as well or better known for his expertise on historical Chinese philology compared with his early success in the field of history. But the most significant moment in his career came in 1953, when following the unexpected death of Gustav Haloun, in 1951, he was appointed to the Chair of Chinese in Cambridge—it was in the intervening period that Arthur Waley was sounded out as to a possible application for the position and delivered the famous retort “I would rather be dead!”<sup>50</sup> Still only thirty-one at the time of his taking up the post, and youthful in appearance, Pulleyblank was constantly mistaken for an undergraduate by the Bulldogs, the Cambridge University Police, who were in those days charged with ensuring that all students wore gowns after dark.

Haloun was very kindly remembered by all those whom he taught, and even by those who did not study with him, but his curriculum seems to have been an austere one. Beginning at the beginning, the student was taken slowly but surely through the *Analects*.<sup>51</sup> *Mencius* followed, plus, I believe, the balance of the *Four Books*, though thereafter slightly less well trodden paths might be followed, including the *Zhuangzi*, taught in his living room together with his cat Pluto.<sup>52</sup> Pulleyblank by contrast hauled the curriculum into the next millennium, and despite a disinclination with regard to teaching poetry, placed Bai Juyi 白居易 on the syllabus, carefully selecting however those poems of social criticism that had been equipped with ample historical commentary by Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) in 1950; they then remained on the syllabus well into the 1970s.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Kornicki, *Eavesdropping on the Emperor*, 60.

<sup>49</sup>William Sima, *China and ANU: Diplomats, Adventurers, Scholars* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015), 11–14.

<sup>50</sup>Ivan Morris, *Madly Singing in the Mountains* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 85.

<sup>51</sup>David Snellgrove, *Asian Commitment: Travels and Studies in the Indian Sub-Continent and South-East Asia* (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2000), 64.

<sup>52</sup>William E. Skillend, “The Early Days,” 17, and Donald Keene, “Reminiscences of Cambridge,” 21, both in Bowring, *Fifty Years of Japanese*, 10–18 and 19–31, respectively. Denis Twitchett recalled studying the *Doctrine of the Mean* with Haloun, but at a higher level he also read the portion of the *Guanzi* 管子 known as the *Neiye* 內業; his detailed notes on this teaching he passed on to me, and on my retirement I passed them on to my then colleague Antonello Palumbo.

<sup>53</sup>Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, *Yuan-Bai shi jianzheng gao* 元白詩箋證稿 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1979), [i].

By then Pulleyblank was gone, having returned to Canada in 1966. But his time in Cambridge was crucial in linking the period of the advances of the wartime and Scarbrough eras to the subsequent and rather different environment of the 1960s and 1970s. There were of course some continuities, not least in the personnel available in Cambridge. The distinguished archaeologist Cheng Te-k'un 鄭德坤 (1908–2001) had arrived in 1951, bringing with him an art collection recently assembled as Chinese families scrambled to realize their assets in Hong Kong and seek a new life outside the People's Republic, an asset not strictly dedicated to Sinology but still an adornment to the Cambridge scene; only in 1974 did Cheng leave for the Chinese University of Hong Kong.<sup>54</sup> But one even earlier recruit from outside Britain eventually came to spend his entire career in the country, much to its benefit. Piet van der Loon (1920–2002), the son of a Friesian printer, had taken up his studies in Sinology at Leiden before the outbreak of the war, and sustained them there after the defeat of the Netherlands while carrying out desperate underground resistance work. Arriving in Cambridge in 1947 to continue his studies with Haloun, he stayed until leaving for Oxford in 1972, dispensing until the end of his life there invaluable bibliographic advice, and inspiring others to carry on his pioneering fieldwork research into Hokkien ritual and theatrical performance even when he was no longer able to travel amongst the communities still preserving these hitherto neglected traditions. His most conspicuous impact within the academic field was on researchers outside the United Kingdom, in which he played the part of a European figure respected also in North America; but librarians and colleagues closer to home were also deeply grateful for his erudition, though usually in less obvious ways.<sup>55</sup>

Pulleyblank had announced his arrival in Cambridge with a challenging inaugural address on “Chinese History and World History,” in which he complained “Anyone who devotes himself to the study of Chinese must become inured to the scarcely concealed amusement and the facetious comments with which this information is not infrequently received,” an attitude that still lingered in the late 1960s, only to be largely dispelled by the—to the British—quite unexpected and mystifying ferment of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>56</sup> He was however able to recruit from the SOAS History Department a scholar who certainly took the full span of Chinese history seriously, even if he preferred to concentrate on the pre-Buddhist period himself. Michael Loewe, born later in the same year as Pulleyblank, and at the time of writing these words heading towards his hundredth year, and his eightieth year in East Asian Studies, was recruited from classical studies at Oxford in early 1942 to train in the Japanese language and then assist in Japanese code breaking; he remained in government service thereafter, availing himself in this employment of a vice-consular posting to Beijing in 1947, but through contacts with SOAS continued to pursue academic study, eventually joining the History Department there in 1956 and completing a doctorate on the archive of wooden strips retrieved from the ruins of the northern defenses

<sup>54</sup>Cheng Te-k'un 鄭德坤, *Exhibition of Chinese Paintings from the Mu-fei Collection* (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 1954).

<sup>55</sup>Judith Magee Boltz, “In Memoriam Piet van der Loon (7 April 1920–22 May 2002),” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002), v–x.

<sup>56</sup>See p. 1 of E.G. Pulleyblank, “Chinese History and World History,” *Sarawak Museum Journal* 7 (1956), 1–20, as reprinted in Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Essays on Tang and pre-Tang China*, Variorum (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), Chapter I.

of the Han empire in 1963, in which year he moved to Cambridge.<sup>57</sup> Though he published widely on the political and religious history of the Han period, his expertise in manuscript studies in particular came into its own after the advances in the archaeological retrieval of written materials that started during the Cultural Revolution and have been a marked feature of the study of Early China ever since, earning him an international reputation unfortunately not rewarded by the appearance of any British-based successor in his field.

In lacking a British-based successor Michael Loewe has regrettably been far from alone; it was, indeed, the common experience of most of the members of this outstanding generation of wartime recruits. Next in order of age was David Hawkes (1923–2009), another military learner of Japanese, whose post-war Scarbrough funding enabled him to travel as a student to Beijing, arriving in 1948 and only leaving in 1951. His ability to find a place at Peking University and stay there throughout a time of revolutionary change was undoubtedly thanks to the presence there of the remarkable poet and critic William Empson (1906–1984), a man long accustomed to foreign postings ever since being ejected from a fellowship in Magdalene College, Cambridge, in 1929. David Hawkes appears with some frequency throughout the second volume of Empson's biography, both in these early days and later after exile for the poet in East Asia was exchanged in the end for a professorship at Sheffield, and usually the circumstances are convivial, for Hawkes was always at home in literary company.<sup>58</sup> As a translator Hawkes was indeed as close for readability to Waley as any serving British academic ever came, and his publications like those of D.C. Lau eventually reached a wide audience. But his scholarship was also impeccable, so that on the retirement of Dubs it was no surprise that he succeeded to the Professorship of Chinese in 1959, proving to be a well-regarded teacher, though less drawn to administration. In 1971 he resigned, proposing that he would make a living from his pen; fortunately a fellowship at All Souls College from 1973 allowed him like Waley to devote himself to his studies, and to pursue without petty distractions the goal he had articulated in his inaugural: "To conclude, then, our task is not the training of interpreters, nor the indulgence of exotic tastes, nor the revelation of some arcane Truth which the Orient possesses but we do not, not the mastery of a sterile Asiatic scholasticism, but literature."<sup>59</sup> His professorship went in 1972 to Piet van der Loon, so it was for example possible at a subsequent Oxford conference to witness these two peerless scholars agreeing that neither of them knew the meaning in Early China of the graph *yi* 夷, a salutary rebuke to credulous believers in dictionaries.

Hawkes had completed a doctorate on the *Chuci* 楚辭, or *Songs of the South* in his translation, by 1956, but it seems that in Cambridge someone else was also reading this work with Haloun, for a classmate later recalled that this person had ventured to remark to Haloun that the vibrant botanical imagery of the text raised in his mind the possibility that the work was simply the "seed catalogue of the kings of Chu." The hypothesis

<sup>57</sup>Kornicki, *Eavesdropping on the Emperor*, 44; Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Chinese Annals in the Western Observatory: An Outline of Western Studies of Chinese Unearthed Documents* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 411–13. One reason for his attachment to Cambridge over the lure of any professorship elsewhere during his teaching career was the Chinese collection in the University Library.

<sup>58</sup>John Haffenden, *William Empson, Volume II: Against the Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 192, 197, 390, 396.

<sup>59</sup>David Hawkes, *Classical, Modern and Humane: Essays in Chinese Literature*, edited by John Minford and Siu-kit Wong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1989), 23.



was quite possibly proposed by A.R. Davis (1924–1983), who never completed a doctorate himself, though this was not deemed necessary at the time: van der Loon too never completed a doctorate either. It was explained to me by a contemporary of theirs in another field that in those days a doctorate was seen as a somewhat suspicious German invention, whereas the various forms of Asian Studies were so uncommon that a word of mouth reputation was what was really required, and the acquisition of a paper qualification such as a doctorate was seen as a potentially worrying sign of a lack of self-confidence. A publication or two was however normally expected, and Davis did produce a six page article for the journal *Asia Major* in 1955, after several years of teaching Classical Chinese in Cambridge.<sup>60</sup> This was enough to secure him in 1956 a professorship in Sydney, where there were thankfully now more Chinese books to join the Japanese holdings, though unusually among the exponents of Sinology who had started by learning Japanese during the war Davis also maintained an interest in Japanese literature as such, and did not just use the language thereafter to consult Japanese scholarship on Chinese matters; eventually he had major monographs on both Chinese and Japanese poetry to his credit, fully justifying the faith shown in him by the Australian university.<sup>61</sup>

The reminiscence of his Cambridge classmate's reaction to the *Chuci* was that of Denis Twitchett (1925–2006), youngest of the wartime recruits and Scarbrough beneficiaries, who had arrived too late to travel to Beijing, where the outbreak of the Korean War severed already tenuous academic links; instead he pursued his further studies in Japan, drawing on the expertise of Tokyo's long tradition of China scholars. In 1954 he returned not to Cambridge but to the History Department at SOAS, something of a career shift for someone who had started out as a physical geographer, but as it turned out a permanent one, despite a return to Cambridge a couple of years later to join Pulleyblank in making Cambridge a formidable center for Tang studies.<sup>62</sup> In 1962 came the chance to succeed Walter Simon as Professor of Chinese at SOAS, and with it an opportunity to take stock in his inaugural lecture of the desultory story of Chinese studies in Britain during the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and of the changes wrought since the war years.<sup>63</sup> The inaugurals of Pulleyblank and Hawkes had been directed at their contemporaries, entreating them to pay at least some attention to China as a place with cultural traditions worth taking seriously, but despite the historical cast of Twitchett's lecture, unlike them he also had to deal with a future threat that had now appeared on the horizon.

### Beyond the Post-War Era

The 1960s were a long way from the raw emergency measures of wartime and the Scarbrough era of a better way. After five years the money supporting the Scarbrough scheme had run out, though the notion of military language training had not; and the armed forces, which had a regular annual intake of new recruits spending

<sup>60</sup>A.R. Davis, "Allusion in T'ao Yüan-ming," *Asia Major*, New Series, 5.1 (1955), 37–42.

<sup>61</sup>A.D. Stefanowska, "In Memoriam: A. R. Davis 1924–1983," *Japanese Studies* 4.1 (1984), 17–18.

<sup>62</sup>See p. 326 of David McMullen, "Denis Crispin Twitchett, 1925–2006," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 166 (2010), 323–45.

<sup>63</sup>Denis Twitchett, "Land Tenure and the Social Order in T'ang and Sung China: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 28 November 1961." London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1962.

a year on what had been until 1960 for men compulsory National Service, provided the teaching of Chinese for suitable recruits, with consequences that will become clear in due course. But with even this provision removed, it dawned on the government that it was ill prepared to face the modern world. A report was commissioned to consider the provision of “Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies” under the chairmanship of a former ambassador to Moscow, Sir William Hayter (1906–1995), and provided with funds to visit America by the Rockefeller Foundation. Given that, during the short life of the Scarbrough scheme, the new posts that it funded had been filled by those most immediately to hand, which mainly meant language-oriented scholars, Hayter’s committee concluded that their departments were short of social scientists and modernists in general. They recommended graduate studentships to redress the balance, but they did not envisage more than a year devoted to language training.<sup>64</sup>

Twitchett was well aware of at least two nations in East Asia that had not sprung into being overnight, and whose written languages drew upon non-alphabetic forms of writing; intensive study he knew from experience could produce a command of either sufficient for some narrow purposes, but not the level of understanding required by teachers in tertiary education: “If Chinese studies are to be expanded in newly established centres, as we all hope will be the case, it is essential that they should be in the hands of properly trained specialists. The training of such specialists cannot be accomplished in a few months.”<sup>65</sup> His words were of course ignored. The results of the implementation of the Hayter Report were therefore slightly paradoxical. It did make good some of the deficiencies caused by the rapid Scarbrough era expansion by promoting the social sciences in Chinese studies. But the United States system that the Hayter committee members took as their model for the future proved to be remarkably adept at luring away several of Twitchett’s colleagues precisely because they had the background in Sinology that made their disciplinary expertise in literature or Buddhism especially attractive, and they went on to distinguished and much better paid careers at Berkeley, Harvard, and Yale. One wonders what might have happened had someone given the committee members the fare for a boat train to Paris instead. As it turned out, in 1968, following Pulleyblank’s departure, Twitchett took up the vacant professorship at Cambridge, and D.C. Lau stepped up to take over his role in SOAS.

In some respects, then, Twitchett had made life more difficult for himself by trenchantly advocating the need for education in Sinology in America itself in the teeth of the prevailing vogue for “Area Studies,” raising a “Lone Cheer for Sinology.” The term “Sinology” he saw as capable of narrower or broader definition. At its most basic, it referred to “the traditional discipline of textual criticism and ‘philology’ applied to Chinese literature, a set of techniques designed to extract the most accurate possible information from a body of data, in this case the written word.” This “irreducible essential in the training of a scholar,” however, was not in his view the end of the matter. Taking his own discipline of history as an example he noted that the problem of understanding the sources went beyond the philological: “To get beyond the carefully composed picture which they have handed down to us, we require an intimate understanding of their tradition, and to share, in part at least, their cultural and intellectual background.” His conclusion was that “if we are to stay in business as our

<sup>64</sup>University Grants Committee: *Report of the Sub-Committee on Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African Studies* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1961), 78.

<sup>65</sup>Twitchett, “Land Tenure,” 35.

Japanese and Chinese colleagues develop their own methodologies, we must urgently need to train a generation to succeed us who have had both a first-rate Sinological training and a sound academic education in the discipline which they wish to profess. This will take anything from seven to ten years.”<sup>66</sup> If any educational or university official in the United Kingdom read this, which is unlikely since it was published in North America, they would probably have smiled wanly; the British economy was stumbling into rocky territory, while China then seemed very, very far away.

### Military Language Training Continued

But not to the armed forces, who had not forgotten the arrival of the Chinese Red Army in the Korean conflict, and the presence of overseas Chinese in the volatile environment of Southeast Asia, as their colonial involvement there was wound up; still they watched the border of Hong Kong with necessary diligence. The teaching of Chinese to National Service recruits in the RAF has already been mentioned. This was not an opportunity open to all, since it was apparently possible because of Cold War sensibilities to be excluded on political grounds.<sup>67</sup> The teaching was initially undertaken at SOAS by SOAS staff, and detours into such matters as Tang poetry were firmly discouraged: quotations from Tang poetry were unlikely to be picked up in signals traffic intercepted in Hong Kong.<sup>68</sup> True, but one later military attaché who was able to quote Tang poetry during his posting to Beijing found it a distinct advantage to be treated as an educated person, unlike his colleagues from other nations. Yet unfortunately the 1960s vogue prompted by Arthur Waley for translating Tang poetry in Britain, a vogue that involved even the cultured modern historian Jerome Ch'en or Chen Zhirang 陳志讓 (1919–2019) during his time in England, had faded almost entirely by the early twenty-first century. Even so this continued military route into the study of China had by then produced two further professors of Chinese at Cambridge and London, David McMullen and David Pollard, the former an authority on Tang culture who studied with Pulleyblank in Cambridge, and the latter initially an expert on the twentieth-century writer Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885–1967), a figure whose intellectual roots in earlier literature inevitably drew David Pollard, a *summa cum laude* level graduate of Pulleyblank's course, into further work translating from Classical Chinese.<sup>69</sup>

But the most unexpected result of this language teaching came when a contemporary of these scholars who had been learning Russian during his time in the RAF decided on his first day in Cambridge to follow a friend and switch to Chinese; needless to say, the friend quickly relented, but Glen Dudbridge (1938–2017) pursued the study of China to the end. His doctoral mentor, H.C. Chang, had been employed at Cambridge to teach *baihua* 白話 literature, but naturally proved an exceptional guide to exploring the antecedents to the novel *Xiyouji* 西遊記 or *Journey to the West*, which involved plenty of literary rather than colloquial material. After teaching at first in Oxford, Glen Dudbridge succeeded Twitchett at Cambridge and then van der Loon at Oxford, producing a number of doctoral students himself: when a volume in his honor was published in 2007, half a dozen of the contributors had completed their higher degrees

<sup>66</sup>Denis Twitchett, “A Lone Cheer for Sinology,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 24.1 (1964), 109–12.

<sup>67</sup>Martin Bernal, *Geography of a Life* (n.p.: Xlibris, 2012), 99; Martin was the son of the well-known Marxist scientist J.D. Bernal (1901–1971).

<sup>68</sup>Brown, *The School of Oriental and African Studies*, 200–201.

<sup>69</sup>For David Pollard's examination success, see Bernal, *Geography of a Life*, 233.

under his direction.<sup>70</sup> This was an unusually high number. Denis Twitchett also had a good number of doctoral students to his credit, including during his time at SOAS the outstanding Surabayan-born and Malaysian educated historian Wang Gungwu (b. 1930), whose interests in the early twentieth century history of China, like those of Charles Bawden, were also somehow diverted, if only to the multiethnic China of the tenth century.<sup>71</sup> But in both these cases, and usually in the cases of the other professors mentioned, all the doctoral students involved in pre-modern studies ended up overseas, whether they had come to Britain for their education or had been brought up in the country. Only Tao Tao Liu, initially a researcher into early Chinese poetry who studied under David Hawkes in Oxford to gain (under the name of Sanders) a doctorate on early poetry in 1973, stayed there, but to teach Modern Chinese.<sup>72</sup> One further British recruit, Paul Thompson (1931–2007), who started as a missionary child in China and underwent wartime internment there by the Japanese, arrived at SOAS after a North American education in Chinese that culminated in a 1970 doctorate for the University of Washington. The Hayter reforms helped to broaden the study of China in Britain to institutions such as the universities of Leeds, Durham, and Edinburgh, but not the study of Sinology.

To understand the extraordinary rate of attrition among young British Sinologists one has to look at the larger context of support for education in the United Kingdom after the war. University education, the preserve before World War II of a very narrow elite of moneyed students plus a few less affluent students funded by various charitable scholarships, was opened up by a 1944 Education Act associated with the Conservative politician R.A. Butler (1902–1982), which gave state support for able pupils to a higher tier of ‘Grammar Schools’ in secondary education, and also provided support for university study for those accepted by the universities. Glen Dudbridge, a product of Bristol Grammar School, was just one example of a post-war scholar who was never privately educated. Those who qualified for state support at the highest level were, however, still a very small proportion of the population. Access to higher education was then systematically broadened by expanding the range of degree awarding institutions, while replacing student grants with loans. This created a market system in place of the top-down support of the type exemplified by the Scarbrough and Hayter bounties, eliminating, for example, the University Grants Committee that had commissioned the Hayter report, and saving central government from having to hand out money to underwrite higher education, something that it was becoming increasingly reluctant to do, much to the disadvantage of what were falsely perceived as “minority” concerns like African and Asian studies.

In fact this broadening and simplifying of the system had a hidden fatal flaw. Markets only work when the participants possess the knowledge to make rational choices; when knowledge is what one is selling, the choices can only be irrational, based on ignorance. The effects of the move from a planned higher education to a market free for all on Britain’s knowledge of the world’s languages turned out to be

<sup>70</sup>Daria Berg, *Reading China: Fiction, History and the Dynamics of Discourse. Essays in Honour of Professor Glen Dudbridge* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>71</sup>Wang Gungwu, *Divided China: Preparing for Reunification, 883–947* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2007), x, xvii.

<sup>72</sup>Frank Joseph Shulman, *Doctoral Dissertations on China, 1971–1975: A Bibliography of Studies in Western Languages* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 146. Cf. A.A. Milne, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (London: Methuen, 1926), 2–3.

devastating, so much so that SOAS had to start shedding posts wholesale to meet the crisis: in his history of the School Ian Brown refers to the period from 1976 to the 1990s as “The great contraction.”<sup>73</sup> He describes how a point was reached where national provision of Asia and African languages was quite inadequate to meet the demands of government, and a third though more rudimentary investigation of the matter was commissioned, under the chairmanship of Sir Peter Parker (1924–2002), who had been yet another wartime student of Japanese, though he had subsequently pursued a very successful career in business; the outcome, “Speaking for the Future,” appeared in 1986. Parker was charged however simply with determining what was needed to meet the demands of commerce and diplomacy: the possibility that the civilizations of Asia and Africa might be of value as objects of study in themselves seem not to have for an instant troubled the minds of those in government. Sir Peter himself was quite clear about the narrowness of such an approach: in conversation he described the prevailing government philosophy as ‘Poujadisme,’ but he could only do what he was asked to do.

### The Failure of the Educational Market Place

And the nation got what its leaders wanted: Chinese studies survived, and slowly, with the emergence of Chinese financial power, began even to prosper; but Sinology, the means towards a humanistic understanding of the Chinese heritage, tended to contract. The retirement of the Scarbrough generation brought fresh faces to Britain, from Europe, North America, East and Southeast Asia, so that the academic quality of Sinology did not diminish, despite the pressure on the quantity of posts not devoted to contemporary China. A post in the history of Chinese medicine was introduced at SOAS, but not maintained after the holder left. Fortunately at UCL, the institution where the teaching of Chinese had first started in the nineteenth century, a second post in the history of Chinese medicine was then established, with help from the Wellcome Foundation. The holder of that post still teaches there as Professor of Chinese History, the first holder of such a title in the UK to deal with premodern China. Those British scholars who had started their careers in a Sinological context were otherwise scattered across the globe, starting with Denis Twitchett, who left for Princeton in 1980, after concluding that “the only thing that will change British attitudes is another war, and God knows we do not want that.” David Pollard left for Hong Kong in 1989, to be replaced by another RAF trainee, Hugh Baker, who had added fluency in Cantonese and a doctorate in social anthropology to his undergraduate education in Sinology. But Hugh Baker was succeeded by a Dutch scholar, David McMullen by a Belgian scholar, and Glen Dudbridge initially by a Canadian, then by another Dutch scholar, so that there was eventually no Briton to provide leadership in any of the three long established centers of Sinology.

Given the signal contribution made to Sinology in the United Kingdom by Piet van der Loon this was by no means to be regretted, but it did leave the country vulnerable to the rise of the anti-“European” sentiment embodied in Brexit, as well as to the vagaries of what was, as explained above, a rigged market system. No wonder that professors Dutch and Austrian, to say nothing of Italians, preferred not to stay once this trend had become clear. As in Britain’s hour of need in 1939, the contribution of scholars from German universities who have chosen so far to remain should elicit much

<sup>73</sup>Brown, *The School of Oriental and African Studies*, 206–44.

more gratitude than they have been accorded. For at best only a stuttering progress nationally has been apparent in recent years. Thus while Durham University had eventually risen to the point of providing a training in Sinology sufficient to start one or two British scholars on their research careers, the Vice-chancellor Sir Kenneth Calman during his tenure of office, deeming this insufficiently impressive, closed down East Asian Studies in 2007, though subsequently a retrospective sense that this perhaps ran counter to the tide of history has seen a rebuilding of Chinese Studies in Durham, even if not so much of Sinology. A reverse of this type was actually not unprecedented: Glasgow briefly supported Chinese Studies in the 1960s, but its contemporary operation is of more recent foundation. In fact despite Sir Peter Parker's due explanation of the immediate and practical needs confronting Britain in 1986, it took at least a quarter of a century and many more reiterations of his arguments before the provision of modern Chinese language teaching in universities began to improve.<sup>74</sup> Eventually the message does get through to the market, but only after a generation has blundered on in ignorance.

Plainly this improvement in language provision has been not unconnected with the rise of commerce between Britain and China, and the power of the Chinese economy. This suggests that the roots of this particular efflorescence could prove slightly shallow. In the late twentieth century it was the Japanese economy that commanded the attention of the world, with talk of an emerging Japanese super-state, so that by 2002 even after some initial retrenchment over fifty institutions still offered degree courses incorporating some Japanese language teaching; now that the Japanese economy looks less special, that number seems to judge from online university guides to have dropped by about two thirds.<sup>75</sup> The cultural legacy of Japan has of course not diminished by two thirds, not will the cultural legacy of China diminish, should China's economic advance falter in its turn. This does not seem always to be heritage that is visible to proponents of language teaching, who apparently speak of "Sinology with its stress upon examining the classical and complex fragments of a long-distant past," a description which is for several reasons quite hard to understand.<sup>76</sup>

### British Sinology in Retrospect

Yet Sinology survives in Britain. In some respects the "totally utilitarian" values embodied in Sir Peter's report had less calamitous consequences in East Asian studies than in Southeast Asian studies, where the numbers involved in pre-modern studies soon sank dangerously low, and no economy emerged in the area capable of exciting the cupidity

<sup>74</sup>Tinghe Jin, *Interculturality in Learning Mandarin Chinese in British Universities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 28–34.

<sup>75</sup>Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, *Japanese Degree Courses 2001–2002: A Directory of Japanese Degree Courses in Universities and Other Tertiary Education Institutions in the United Kingdom* (London: The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, 2002), 10.

<sup>76</sup>Jin, *Interculturality in Learning Mandarin Chinese in British Universities*, 42. The writings of Glen Dudbridge and David Pollard demonstrate eloquently that "fragments of a long-distant past" is a completely inappropriate description of the realms of Sinological knowledge that they explored. True, the work of Paul Thompson, mentioned below, does concern the reconstruction of ancient fragments, but his rationale for undertaking this work explicitly contrasts the paucity of work on ancient Chinese texts with the abundant concern in Europe with the heritage of Greece and Rome, and indeed later times; for what possible reason is China to be assigned an inferior status in this regard?

of Britons to the point where a panic about language learning set in.<sup>77</sup> The effect of the Scarbrough expansion may be long forgotten, but we are not back in the 1930s. Of the scholars of the pre-war period Charles Bawden noted in his obituary for Walter Simon that “they did not, and could not, found schools.”<sup>78</sup> This on closer analysis was not quite completely the case, since it is in fact possible at least to trace one or two lineages: Legge did teach the Austrian Arthur von Rosthorn (1862–1945), who with the German Augustus Conrady (1864–1925) taught Gustav Haloun. It is moreover difficult thereafter to point to strict divisions between Haloun students and Simon students in terms of the influences visible from their teachers: we simply do not see in the 1950s mini-Halouns and mini-Simons.

Rather than constituting separate schools, influences seem to cross between the two groups. Haloun picked up from Conrady, as it would appear, an interest in contacts between Chinese and Indo-Europeans, but this interest manifests itself conspicuously in the writings of the Simon student Pulleyblank. This aspect of Pulleyblank’s work, moreover, was not picked up by David McMullen, and neither by his own doctoral student Oliver Moore, the founding professor of Chinese at Groningen. Likewise Haloun’s careful approach to textual matters was certainly apparent in Twitchett’s teaching: I recall for example how he suggested that parallel versions of pre-imperial anecdotes could be used to illustrate the use of different particles, and his teaching of poetry always paid close attention to rhyme schemes, not something that he was often able to display in his historical writings. But the actual reconstruction of texts was more of a published concern of Glen Dudbridge, the Pulleyblank-era student of H.C. Chang.<sup>79</sup> For that matter Paul Thompson, whose published work in the field of textual scholarship remains paradigmatic, was in fact a student of a scholar of German origin who never taught in the United Kingdom, Hellmut Wilhelm (1905–1990).<sup>80</sup> Despite their respect for Haloun, all his students, once they moved away from his areas of expertise, had in Piet van der Loon’s opinion to teach themselves how to address the topics that they took up for themselves, and the same may also be said to be true of Simon’s students. High standards of scholarship they absorbed from their German mentors, but the way in which they applied them was in every case to a greater or lesser degree original. Ultimately, perhaps, whether the wartime and Scarbrough recruits, and the later RAF trainees, actually constituted a school is hard to say, though even if they were not conscious of doing so, their common experiences gave them a certain group identity.

Before them the study of China in the United Kingdom was far from completely negligible in its results. It has even been argued that the age of Legge and Giles saw a crucial influence of Britain on the development of scholarship in China itself. Rudolf G. Wagner (1941–2019) in one of his last publications advanced the idea that the critical debates between Legge and Giles over the authenticity of sources such as the *Daode jing* helped to inspired twentieth century Chinese critical scholarship, though he notes that a direct knowledge of Giles and his writings only reached China through a

<sup>77</sup>See p. 25 of the insightful preface by Vladimir Braginsky, editor of *Classical Civilisations of South East Asia: An Anthology of Articles Published in the Bulletin of SOAS* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002). Braginsky is a particularly well-informed but originally Russian-educated observer of British academic life in his field.

<sup>78</sup>Bawden, “Walter Simon,” 475.

<sup>79</sup>Glen Dudbridge, *Lost Books of Medieval China* (London: The British Library, 1999).

<sup>80</sup>P.M. Thompson, *The Shen Tzu Fragments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

1931 essay by the SOAS benefactor Yu Pinghan.<sup>81</sup> The issues discussed by Wagner are complex and his study as a whole constitutes a typically challenging legacy for future historians to respond to, but in my view it is possible to see at least to a certain extent in the nineteenth-century Chinese study of Buddhism an entirely indigenous critical trend that antedated the era of treaty port scholarship.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless the reporting to China of the opinions of British Sinology that Wagner documents does undeniably indicate that by the 1930s it had won some degree of international recognition.

In the post-war period, however, such international recognition became more common: Twitchett had an article published in the Japanese journal *Shigaku zasshi* 史學雜誌 as early as 1965, with several others translated into Japanese and Chinese in later years; Graham had an article in Chinese published in a conference volume in Singapore in 1987, apparently based on an original contribution; and Dudbridge, even more significantly, had an entire monograph translated into Chinese and published in Taiwan in 1990.<sup>83</sup> This trend was of course a by-product of rising prosperity that created better academic links, but it does also suggest that British Sinology was in some instances at least now regularly on a par with the standards achieved in East Asia, and that it had things worth saying that were deemed of value to those not at home in English.

But perhaps the last word on this era should go to the veteran Evangeline Dora Edwards, who was placed much better than most to see this efflorescence of Sinology within the national story of the British peoples as they moved from an age of imperialism to one of postcolonial acceptance of the value of non-Western cultures, granted that for all the efforts of the scholars named here, among many others, the transition is still far from complete even today. In 1946 Edwards was sent on a tour of the Asia-Pacific region by the military authorities for whom she had worked during the war years, in order to assess and report on the outcome of the training received by British military personnel. The report itself is unfortunately largely lost,<sup>84</sup> but the many impressions she received on her journey did inspire her after getting back to her homeland in February 1947 to compose, after—by her account—a further year of reading, an anthology of Western and translated writings about the whole region. This starts disarmingly enough in her preface with a somewhat ambivalent quotation from a Western writer on the question of colonialism that concludes tentatively “Providence may surely be trusted to work out its own ends.” But ultimately her anthology ends with an extraordinarily prescient and unflinchingly trenchant 1848 analysis of the folly of colonial rule from George Rodney Mundy (1805–1884), a naval commander who later assisted Garibaldi in his assault on Bourbon rule in Sicily.<sup>85</sup> Providence, it

<sup>81</sup>See p. 486 of Rudolf G. Wagner, “The Global Context of a Modern Chinese Quandary: Doubting or Trusting the Records of Antiquity,” *Monumenta Serica* 67.2 (2019), 441–504.

<sup>82</sup>T.H. Barrett, “The Early Modern Origins of Chinese Indology,” in *India–China: Intersecting Universalities*, edited by Anne Cheng and Sanchi Kumar (Paris: Collège de France, 2020), chapter 6 (open access).

<sup>83</sup>Du Deqiao 杜德橋 [Glen Dudbridge], trans. Li Wenbin 李文彬 et al., *Miaoshan chuanshuo—Guanyin pusa yuanqi kao* 妙善傳說—觀音菩薩緣起考 (Taipei: Juliu tushu gongsi, 1990), which unlike the original English text on which the translation is based includes a complete facsimile of the Chinese source examined. There is a bibliography of Angus Graham in Roth, *A Companion*, 221–27, and a “Bibliography of the Works of Denis Twitchett” in *Asia Major*, Third Series, 22.1 (2009), v–xv.

<sup>84</sup>Kornicki, *Eavesdropping on the Emperor*, 313–15.

<sup>85</sup>E.D. Edwards, *Bamboo, Lotus and Palm: An Anthology of the Far East, South-East Asia and the Pacific* (London: William Hodge), ix, 360–61.



would appear, no longer smiles on British Sinology. Yet the cross-cultural understanding that she urged in her preface was in some measure always promoted by her students, and the students of her students. Perhaps what followed her teaching in a few British universities in the post-war twentieth century will prove to be no more than an episode, but it is even so an episode that should surely be remembered.

**Conflicts of Interest.** The author declares none.