

OBITUARY

Gustav Haloun

Professor Gustav Haloun died suddenly on 24th December, 1951. Born on 12th January, 1898, at Pirnitz, Moravia, he studied Chinese first in Vienna under Professor A. von Rosthorn, and later at Leipzig, under Professor A. Conrady, from whose School he was proud to hail. He lectured as a "Privatdozent" in Prague (1926-7), Halle (1928-1931), and Goettingen (1931-8), and deputized for the Professors of Chinese at Bonn and in Berlin.

Elected in 1938 to the chair of Chinese Language and History in Cambridge (and later to a fellowship at King's College), he brought eminent scholarship, teaching experience, and an astounding knowledge of Far Eastern bibliography, gained when he was building up sinological libraries in Prague, Halle, and Goettingen. So to enlarge the Chinese library at Cambridge was one of his first tasks. The unique Wade library, which formed its nucleus and to which little had been added since it was catalogued by Professor H. Giles, was systematically developed by him till it became one of the leading sinological libraries of the world. He took also the first steps to develop the Japanese library, which is now equally outstanding. Professor Haloun started the recataloguing of the whole Chinese collection, and the present card catalogue, a model of accuracy, was written almost exclusively by himself and has set new standards in this field.

The recommendations of the Scarbrough report, which made the development of the Far East library possible, allowed also for the creation of further posts in Far Eastern subjects. Professor Haloun never ceased to urge the need for such an expansion, and the posts created under his guidance include two lectureships in Chinese, two in Japanese, one in Japanese and Korean, one in Altaic languages, one in Far Eastern History, and one in Far Eastern Art and Archaeology. There is also a lector in Chinese and one in Japanese.

Haloun's efforts sometimes reached beyond the confines of Cambridge. The revival of *Asia Major*, under the joint auspices of Oxford, Cambridge, and London was primarily due to his efforts.

It seems tragic that Haloun's energies, apart from teaching, should have been spent almost exclusively on this work of expansion, to the detriment of scholarly publications. For he had much to say.

Though endowed with the vision of a historian he felt compelled to concentrate on philology and particularly textual criticism in order to assess correctly the value of his sources. There he displayed great acumen and again he set new standards. His "Confucian Fragments" (*Asia Major*, vol. viii) opened up a new approach to the treatment of ancient Chinese texts, and though the basis was broadened in the case of one fragment in his recent paper in *Asia Major*, New Series, vol. ii, and included a stemma and a full apparatus criticus, the main conclusions had been drawn as early as 1932 and were only reaffirmed in 1951. This part of the former article was recast in preparation for a detailed study on a chapter of *Goantzyy*, which it is hoped may be published posthumously.

Haloun's contributions to history proper were mainly devoted to the history of Ancient China and bear especially on historical geography. His thesis (*Asia Major*, 1924) dealt with the clan settlements, the first part of his "Habilitationsschrift" ("Seit wann kannten die Chinesen die Tocharer oder Indogermanen überhaupt") was published in 1927, the "Tokharian problem" being taken up again in his "Üe-Tʃi Frage" of 1937 (*ZDMG.*) and, quite recently, in his article on the Liang Chou rebellion (*Asia Major*), which was based on his studies on the "little" Yüeh-Chih. While all these studies are impressive for the detailed material as much as for the solidity of the argument, a short paper in the "Japanisch-deutsche Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Technik" (*Nichi-Doku Gakugei*) on "Die Rekonstruktion der chinesischen Urgeschichte durch die Chinesen" shows the astounding breadth of his studies in his early period.

A recent tribute paid by an eminent scholar in the Central Asian field is witness that Professor Haloun never allowed the scope of his interests to be narrowed down exclusively to the Chinese field: "Perhaps arising out of his interest in the Tokharian problem, Haloun took a wide interest in all matters concerning the history of Central Asia. As few Sinologists, he was alive to the links that joined Ancient China to the Western World, to Iran, and further to the Greco-Roman area. To the solution of problems connected with this interrelation he often provided the guiding point of view, and by his advice and help put many scholars coming from other fields under a great debt of gratitude."

With his work focussed on ancient Chinese history it is not surprising that Chinese palæography and epigraphy had been

included in Haloun's studies. Very valuable contributions are to be found among his unpublished material.

In spite of his absorption in the Library, Haloun hardly lessened the heavy burden of teaching he had undertaken, even after he had gained the assistance of younger colleagues. Many students of all grades benefited from his teaching and scholars, both of this country and abroad, sought his help and often included in their works what he himself did not find time to publish.

His kindness won the hearts of all who met him, and nobody who enjoyed his hospitality or was privileged to be taken by him over the Far Eastern Library could fail to be impressed by his stupendous knowledge. In recent years, in particular after he returned from his very successful book-buying mission to the Far East (in 1949), his health seemed to be greatly impaired and colleagues and friends were alarmed to see that he would not allow himself the complete rest which was needed to restore his strength.

Professor Haloun's death has caused a feeling of great bereavement to close friends and fellow workers. But the sorrow of sinologists at large will hardly be less poignant. Only a portion of the vast amount of knowledge he had amassed by indefatigable research has been left as unpublished material, and much that he alone could have taught us will now be lost for ever.

W. SIMON.