

Ronald Eric Emmerick (1937–2001)

The death of Ron Emmerick, slightly less than two years after his election to an Honorary Fellowship in our Academy, has brought to an end a distinguished career in Iranian philology, comparable only to that of another Honorary Fellow in the same field who was also Ron's teacher, the late Sir Harold W. Bailey.

Ronald Eric Emmerick was born on 9 March 1937, the only son of Eric Steward Emmerick, a builder settled in Carlton, NSW, and Myrtle Caroline Emmerick (née Smith). He performed brilliantly at Canterbury Boys High School before enrolling at the University of Sydney where he studied Classics. After graduating in 1959 with First Class Honours and the University Medal, he was employed as a teaching fellow in the Department of Latin as it then was. Like many of the University's best graduates in Classics over the years, Ron Emmerick headed for Cambridge after graduation where he completed both the Classical and Oriental Studies triposes. It was while undertaking the latter that he encountered Sir Harold Bailey, then professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge. According to John Sheldon, Ron Emmerick's good friend and contemporary at the University of Sydney, the young Classicist-about-to-turn-Iranologist became fascinated by Bailey's work on Khotanese and 'spent six weeks copying by hand Bailey's then-unpublished 1332-page *Dictionary of Khotan Saka*, thereby, as he put it, "engraving the entire vocabulary on my mind" (see John Sheldon's obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 2001).

In Cambridge Ron Emmerick was a Research Fellow at St. John's College from 1964 to 1967, working in the fields of Sanskrit, Avestan and most notably Khotanese. After publishing several reviews in 1963 and 1964, Ron produced his first scholarly article in 1965, 'Syntax of the cases in Khotanese', in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* — the first of many contributions in this field. His first monograph, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* appeared in 1967, followed quickly by *Saka Grammatical Studies* and *The Book of Zambasta, a Khotanese Poem on Buddhism* in 1968. The academic year 1967–1968 was spent as Visiting Associate Professor of Old and Middle Iranian at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, and 1970 saw the publication of two more monographs, *The Sutra of Golden Light* and *The Khotanese Srangamasamadhistrā*. In 1971, while teaching at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, he was offered the Chair of Iranian Philology at the University of Hamburg, a position that he held with great distinction until his death.

From this point onward Ron Emmerick's output was prodigious. The ensuing years witnessed the publication of *Saka Documents V* in 1971; *Saka Documents VI* in 1973; *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* in 1979; *The Siddhasara of Ravigupta, vol. 1: The Sanskrit Text* in 1980; and *The Siddhasara of Ravigupta, vol. 2: The Tibetan Version* in 1982. In that same year Ron Emmerick's collaboration with the Scandinavian Iranologist Prods Oktor Skjærvø bore first fruit with their publication of *Studies in the Vocabulary of Khotanese I. The*

Tumshuqese Karmavacana Text appeared in 1985; *Studies in the Vocabulary of Khotanese II*, again with Skjærvø, in 1987; second, revised editions of *The Sutra of Golden Light* in 1990 and *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* in 1992; *Saka Documents VII: the St. Petersburg Collections* with Margarita I. Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja and *A Chinese Text in Central Asian Brahmi Script: New Evidence for the Pronunciation of Late Middle Chinese and Khotanese* with E .G. Pulleyblank in 1993; *Saka Documents VIII: the St. Petersburg Collections*, again with Margarita I. Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja, in 1995; a third, revised edition of *The Sutra of Golden Light* in 1996; *Studies in the Vocabulary of Khotanese III*, again with Skjærvø, in 1997; and *Vagbhata's Atarigahdayasahita* with R.P. Das in 1998.

All the while, moreover, Ron Emmerick taught a full repertoire of courses in Iranian languages at the University of Hamburg; published a steady stream of articles and reviews; and found time to serve on the editorial boards of such fundamental publications in his fields (Iranology, Indology, Tibetology, Buddhist studies) as the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *Groningen Oriental Studies*, *Gonda Indological Studies*, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, *Journal Asiatique*, *Silk Road Studies*, *Manuscripta Orientalia*, and *Tocharian and Indo-European Studies*.

Ron Emmerick's eminence was recognised by an invitation to deliver a series of lectures at the Collège de France in 1988; and by his election to a Corresponding Fellowship by the British Academy and a Corresponding Membership of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente in 1990; a Corresponding Membership in the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 1997; and of course his election to an Honorary Fellowship in our own Academy in 1999.

Ron Emmerick was a modest man of enormous erudition whose fundamental contributions in Khotanese, Buddhism, Tibetology, and Middle Iranian studies in general scarcely found any resonance in the country of his birth. Yet he was also a realist, and when I saw him in 1998 and again in 1999, at the height of his powers — a worthy successor to his late mentor Bailey — he never expressed the slightest anger at the fact that he had had to abandon Australia for a career in Iranian philology. He was a humane scholar of the highest calibre, and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

The University of Hamburg honoured Ron Emmerick with an academic memorial service on 14 December 2001, preparing a book of reminiscences contributed by friends and colleagues.

Ron Emmerick is survived by his wife, Margaret Ann (née Frohnsdorff), whom he married in London in 1962, and two daughters, Catherine Ann and Veronica Jane. A son, Paul Ronald, predeceased him in July last year.